TOWARD A PRODUCTIVE & HEALTHY WEST

“One cannot be pessimistic about the West. This is the native home of hope. When it fully learns that cooperation, not rugged individualism, is the quality that most characterizes and preserves it, then it will have achieved itself and outlived its origins. Then it has a chance to create a society to match its scenery.”

Wallace Stegner, The Sound of Mountain Water

We urge Congress and the Administration to advance the following principles to achieve rural economic health and a productive agricultural sector, provide for our human needs, and protect the landscapes in which we live and work.

The long-term economic health and resiliency of our nation is directly dependent on responsible management of our natural resources – including productive public and private lands, and abundant water supplies.

Across the West, communities and organizations are working together to restore and manage forests and rangelands while creating local and regional jobs. Together we are committed to the care and stewardship of our natural resources and are investing in our country’s future. We believe the rural West can play a vital role in solving some of America’s biggest challenges, including protecting working lands, and maintaining the cultural values of both cooperation and independence.
TOWARD A PRODUCTIVE & HEALTHY WEST

WE BELIEVE THAT:

• Working lands, human communities, and wild places are all important and interdependent. Their health must be protected and advanced together.

• Ecosystem productivity, social equity, and economic well-being go hand in hand. Good public policy builds on and reinforces these linkages.

• Large-scale resource planning that is cross-boundary and inclusive, and science- and place-based, is essential.

• The cooperative management of private and public lands is good for business, public health, and species conservation.

• Voluntary, market- and incentive-based programs are key tools for landowners to participate in conservation, diversify their operations, and help keep landscapes intact.

• Hope for rural America lies in collaboration, common sense and non-partisan solutions that ensure sustainable working lands and diverse new economies.

We ask that you work in partnership with our communities and organizations to develop solutions based on these principles and include place-based expertise. We stand ready to provide specifics upon request and look forward to visiting with you in Washington, D.C. We also invite you to visit our lands and communities in the rural West -- to celebrate the grandeur of our landscapes and see these solutions at work.