



**News Release
For Immediate Release**

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Baja California, Mexico, Joins Western States and Tribal Nations

VERNAL, Utah -- Aug 29, 2019 – Western States and Tribal Nations (WSTN), an initiative led by sovereign tribal nations, states and counties to advocate for rural economic development and a cleaner environment through sustainable production of natural gas, today welcomed the State of Baja California's Ministry of Economy as its newest member.

The State of Baja California's Secretary of Economic Development, Carlo Bonfante, joined representatives of the existing WSTN members – the Ute Tribal Nation, the States of Wyoming and Utah, and the Colorado counties of Garfield, Mesa, Moffat and Rio Blanco – at a ceremony to sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) at the Uintah Basin Energy Summit in Vernal.

"It's a great occasion for Baja California to come to the Uintah Basin Energy Summit and sign the MOU with Western States and Tribal Nations. Baja California has an extraordinary opportunity for natural gas exports to Asia and South and Central America. We are improving our ports and rail so we have many ways to connect to the states around us. We consider this area as a region rather than states and borders, and we believe this is a win-win for all of us and our economic futures," Bonfante said after the signing.

"As a people that has defended America's environment for centuries, the Ute Tribe is proud to be joined by another voice from a sovereign nation in Western States and Tribal Nations. Our goal of increasing tribal self-determination through careful environmental stewardship of our energy resources aligns closely with the state of Baja California's desire to advance the economic well-being of its people," said **Shaun Chappoose of the Ute Tribal Business Council**. "We all want to help reduce global emissions by bringing our natural gas to Asian markets that now use higher-emitting fuels because they don't have a cleaner choice."

"We are excited to welcome the Baja California Ministry of Economy to the Western States and Tribal Nations initiative," said **Laura Nelson, the Utah Governor's energy advisor and executive director of the Governor's Office of Energy Development**. "Our partnerships will lead to high-value results for all our economies, environments and people."

WSTN was formed after the release of a report in April 2019 entitled "Natural Gas Markets for the Western States and Tribal Nations." The report details how abundant natural gas resources in the Piceance and Uinta basins of Colorado and Utah can help regional, and global communities thrive economically and environmentally if more production and infrastructure expansion efforts are approved.

As of now, the infrastructure does not exist to effectively get that natural gas, nor that produced in Wyoming's Green River basin, to markets. WSTN is focused on rectifying that through collaboration with a diverse set of stakeholders across western North America including tribes, natural gas producers, LNG exporters, conservation groups and others.

"This reflects our continued effort to build a diverse and broad group of stakeholders that transcends boundaries and works toward common goals. Our unique group – led by sovereign nations, states and

counties – sees a new path toward rural economic development, tribal self-determination and a cleaner global environment by establishing an inclusive conversation about natural gas development,” said **Andrew Browning of Western States and Tribal Nations**.

The addition of Baja Mexico to the initiative creates another export avenue for these stranded natural gas assets, and supplements efforts WSTN has already undertaken to support the proposed Jordan Cove LNG terminal in Coos Bay, Oregon.

Rio Blanco County Commissioner Jeff Rector commented: “I see this helping create a great future for us by adding another option to help us get our natural gas to market. Without figuring out a market for it, our rural future is bleak. Our four Colorado counties joined this initiative in the first place because we saw what was happening as our state began backing away from energy. It’s a part of our lives and part of everybody’s lives, whether they know it or not”.

“The addition of Baja California to our organization aligns our existing membership with a country that has growing needs for multiple energy resources. Additionally, we see Baja as a strategic member that will provide a logical export partner to Asian countries seeking LNG and low-sulfur coal, two resources that drive Wyoming’s economy,” said **Bryan Hassler, Executive Director of the Wyoming Pipeline Authority**.

About Western States and Tribal Nations

Western States and Tribal Nations is a unique, trans-national initiative led by sovereign tribal nations, states and counties focused on creating rural economic development, advancing tribal self-determination and a reducing global emissions through the export of clean natural gas from North American producing basins to international markets.

(Photo: Members of the Western States and Tribal Nations gather as Baja California signs the groups Memorandum of Understanding.)

