



# NEWS RELEASE

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Treasurer Lockyer, Oregon Gov. John Kitzhaber, other West Coast leaders announce new infrastructure partnership** *Joint effort seeks smarter ways to finance, build projects*

SAN FRANCISCO – Officials from California, Oregon, Washington and British Columbia today announced they have formed a partnership to help them meet critical infrastructure investment needs that will total an estimated \$1 trillion over the next 30 years.

“We cannot build the economy and future we want if we don’t make these investments, and we cannot pay for it with our general funds alone.” said Lockyer. “We have to find a smarter, better way. That’s what this partnership can help us do.”

The West Coast Infrastructure Exchange (WCX) brings together governors, treasurers and key infrastructure development agencies in the three states and British Columbia. Lockyer today in San Francisco joined Oregon Gov. John Kitzhaber, Oregon State Treasurer Ted Wheeler and representatives from Washington and British Columbia to unveil the new nonprofit entity.

The WCX’s goal: Improve the region’s economic competitiveness and maintain its unparalleled quality of life by making vital public works projects more feasible through innovative financing, cost savings and better collaboration.

“To build a 21st century infrastructure, we’ll need to raise our game,” said Kitzhaber. “Innovative partnerships like the West Coast Exchange can help us do that by overcoming financial, regulatory and political hurdles and facilitating investment in long-term, job-creating projects.”

Washington Gov. Christine Gregoire applauded the partnership, saying, “Investing in aging infrastructure is critical, not just because of the jobs we create during the construction phase, but because infrastructure is what keeps our economy moving forward. Working together, states and provinces can develop a West Coast that supports continued export growth, a brighter future in green jobs and high quality of life for our families.”

Said British Columbia Premier Christy Clark: “The economic and job creation benefits of infrastructure investment and regional cooperation are undeniable. BC’s participation in the West Coast Infrastructure Exchange, like our efforts through the Pacific Coast Collaborative, will open new pathways, partnerships and markets for BC.”

The Oregon treasurer’s office is coordinating development of the Exchange. “Strong infrastructure is key to our future competitiveness,” said Treasurer Wheeler. “We have economic opportunities on the West Coast, and those will become strategic advantages when we invest in our public facilities, to put people to work in the short- and the long-term.”

The exchange will explore a variety of strategies to make it easier to finance and build infrastructure projects. These include bundling small projects to help them more easily qualify for different financing methods, using performance-based management techniques and exploring alternative funding methods, including private capital, to finance critical projects. The WCX also will identify best practices, provide technical expertise and connect governments with industry experts.

Although no projects have been selected yet, the Exchange is laying the groundwork to identify a first wave of projects. These could include energy efficiency, municipal lighting, water aquifer recharge, and other projects constructed through performance-based partnerships with the private sector.

The WCX partners today released a report by CH2M HILL, a consulting firm hired by the Exchange. The report concluded infrastructure needs will be far greater than the available public financing. The gap between public needs and public financing might be filled by new private investment and delivery models used in other countries, the report stated.

An organization such as the West Coast Exchange, the report found, could help address the region’s infrastructure needs by identifying promising and innovative financing methods and sharing them with state and local governments.

The WCX effort began in 2011 and has been supported by grants from the Rockefeller Foundation totaling \$750,000. During a start-up phase that will run through 2013, an Exchange manager will be recruited, and participating governments will hammer out criteria for evaluating projects.

More information, including examples of innovative projects, the CH2M HILL study and the formal WCX agreement, is available at the Exchange website, at [www.westcoastx.org](http://www.westcoastx.org).

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