



Governor
Chris Gregoire

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MAKING CHANGES FAMILIES CAN COUNT ON

POLICY BRIEF

WORKING LANDS INITIATIVE

Governor Gregoire understands that farming and forest management is vital to our economy and to the continued well-being of many communities. She will work to protect these valuable lands because she knows that Washington was built on family farms and forests.

For more than a century, these landowners and businesses have raised food for local tables, grown trees to build and heat our homes, and supported jobs and rural economies in Washington. As our population grows and the national and global economy changes, the high-quality and local availability of our food and forest products is our competitive advantage.



Working farms and forests mean jobs for Washingtonians. We have the highest per acre forest yields in the nation, providing family-wage jobs to over 50,000 people. The combined agricultural and food industry employs more people than any other business or industrial sector. Today, the total economic impact of the food and agriculture industry in Washington is estimated at more than \$29 billion annually, about 13 percent of the state economy.

Governor Gregoire has traveled all around the world, knocking on doors and drumming up business. She has visited vital international markets from Paris to Frankfurt, Shanghai to Beijing, Tokyo to Kobe, Brisbane to Auckland and Taipei to Seoul. With Governor Gregoire's leadership, Washington farm and forest products are becoming the global standard for high-quality.

The market for Washington agricultural products is strong because our farmers have earned a reputation for producing some of the safest, freshest, finest quality products in the world. Apples, cherries, pears, seafood, wine, or any one of our almost 300 agricultural products are in high demand.

In addition to Governor Gregoire's trade missions, she has been helping agriculture and the forest industry in many other ways. She has looked to the future and is taking steps to reduce our dependence on foreign oil and create new markets for crops grown in Washington. Governor Gregoire established Alternative Fuel Standards that create minimum fuel content requirements for biodiesel and ethanol, promoting crops that can be turned into fuel and other high-value products.

As all farmers know, water is an integral part of the agricultural process. Through the Columbia River Water Management Program, we are developing new storage and conservation projects to make more water available for farming, industry and community growth, and improve stream flows for fish.

These are just a few of the many programs that help our farmers and forest managers succeed, and Governor Gregoire will continue to support these vital industries.

KEEPING OUR FARMS & FORESTS WORKING

In places where farm and forest lands are near growing cities and towns, there is increasing pressure to convert farms and forests to development. With our population expected to double by 2050, some land conversion is inevitable. But we need to explore ways that we can grow and still protect and promote the jobs and products that come from our working farms and forests.

Governor Gregoire is investing in a Working Lands Initiative to keep our farms and forests profitable and productive.

We will develop a long-term strategy for the future of the agricultural industry in Washington, to make sure that Washington competes with the safest and highest quality products. Through this strategy we will hold ourselves accountable by evaluating the strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities facing our agricultural sectors so that we are prepared to respond to rapidly changing agricultural economies.

Landowners want options – including the ability to keep working their lands and still benefit from rising real estate values. Governor Gregoire will help landowners and communities develop programs to protect working farms and forests threatened by increasing development. We will create an Office of Working Farms and Forests in the Conservation Commission to provide more options at the local level for landowners who want to continue farming, ranching and forestry in the face of pressures to convert their lands to subdivisions and shopping malls. Governor Gregoire is also making strategic investments in technical assistance for farm and forest management plans, which will reduce conflicts between farming and big game herds and can provide much-needed regulatory certainty for landowners through long-term plans and permits.

Governor Gregoire will promote innovation by investing in university, state and private sector research and extension programs to develop creative farm practices that ensure Washington growers and processors are competitive in the global economy.



RESEARCH FOR ENERGY INDEPENDENCE

Our country has become increasingly dependent on foreign oil, so Governor Gregoire will continue to invest in programs that will encourage the research and use of alternative fuels, right here in Washington.

Her Energy Freedom Program, which provides low interest loans for bioenergy projects, and the bioenergy initiative, a collaboration between the Department of Agriculture and Washington State University, will encourage research and development in alternative fuels toward an energy policy of “Washington grown and Washington owned.”

PROMOTING WASHINGTON PRODUCTS

Governor Gregoire buys locally and encourages others to look for Washington-grown products in supermarkets and farmers markets. She will more than double the investment in the “Heart of Washington” campaign to promote public awareness of the importance of farmers, ranchers and the food industry and to boost purchases of Washington food products.

MEETING WATER NEEDS

The competition for water intensifies as demand increases. Governor Gregoire is finding better ways to meet current water needs, while making sure water will always be available for fish, farms, people and the natural environment. We are moving forward to implement the Columbia River Basin water supply initiative, accelerating instream flow setting and achievement, and advancing reclaimed water use.

INVESTING IN FARMS & FORESTS

Governor Gregoire’s investment in agricultural and working lands programs will ensure that farms and forests continue to be a thriving part of the economy in Washington well into the future.

Working Lands Initiative	\$19.2 million
Research for Energy Independence	\$4.0 million
Promoting Washington Products	\$0.6 million
Meeting Water Needs	\$57.3 million
Total	\$81.1 million