



# **GEOTHERMAL RISING POLICY**

## **POWERING OUR RENEWABLE FUTURE.**

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### **Western Governors' Association "Heat Beneath Our Feet" Initiative**

*"The geothermal industry is thrilled that Governor Polis has focused on geothermal technologies during his time as Chair of the Western Governors' Association. If the United States is serious about addressing climate change, then the geothermal industry needs to be empowered by Congress and state legislatures to serve a bigger role in heating and cooling our buildings, generating our electricity, and providing heat for agriculture, commercial and industrial uses." - Bryant Jones*

The Western Governors' Association, Chaired by Colorado Governor Polis, has spearheaded an initiative focused on geothermal technologies, culminating in the publication of the report: The Heat Beneath Our Feet. This report recognizes the vast potential of geothermal in the West, both for power generation and heat and cooling. This initiative involved rigorous stakeholder engagement which identified barriers to rapid geothermal expansion and deployment, and the report outlines vital policy recommendations to address these.

Bryant Jones, Executive Director of Geothermal Rising comments: "decarbonizing residential and commercial buildings by using geothermal heating and cooling systems and geothermal heat pumps will significantly reduce carbon, save consumers money, create jobs, and improve public health. Hydrogen, direct air capture, lithium and critical mineral recovery, securing a stable and decarbonized electric grid, efficient and carbon-free air conditioning, and the push to electrify everything will only succeed with geothermal. It is exciting to see that Governor Polis and the WGA realize this fact."

One vital recommendation in the WGA report is risk mitigation programs for geothermal well drilling and exploration. The United States created energy risk mitigation programs after the oil crises in the 1970s which resulted in significant growth for geothermal across the United States in the 1980s. The geothermal industry needs these programs restarted. Additionally, the WGA report recognizes the need for geothermal to be eligible for the same tax credits as other energy technologies such as deducting intangible drilling costs, defined as costs related to drilling that have no salvageable value, from the income tax of geothermal companies.

The WGA report also highlights the need for the geothermal permitting process to be streamlined on federal lands. Geothermal has the lowest lifecycle carbon footprint and the smallest environmental impact of all renewable energy technologies yet has more onerous federal permitting requirements even than that of oil and gas development. The WGA report recognizes this and recommends increasing Bureau of Land Management (BLM) staffing capacity to process geothermal permits, streamlining geothermal leasing, and granting a geothermal-specific categorical exclusion under NEPA for geothermal exploratory drilling on federal lands.



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Demonstration and deployment funding is also recognized by the WGA report. Geothermal technologies are proven and have been cooling homes, heating schools, and generating electricity for decades in the United States. The geothermal industry needs deployment funding to commercialize and scale proven technology as well as demonstration funds to test new innovations.

***About Geothermal Rising:*** *Geothermal Rising (GR) is the largest and oldest geothermal non-profit organization in the world, founded in 1972. GR builds community and empowers the geothermal industry by aligning all geothermal heat source, direct use and power production applications. GR is the leading professional development and educational outreach resource for the geothermal industry. Find out more or join today: <https://www.geothermal.org/>*