

The Western scene . . .

# West governors clout remains to be seen

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SUN VALLEY — Whether the actions of the Western governors at their annual conference the past week will have much impact remains to be seen, but they indicated they are less than enthusiastic over many of President Carter's programs and policies.

Four top U.S. department officials were on hand to defend policies, Jack O'Leary, deputy secretary, U.S. Department of Energy; Dr. M. Rupert Cutler, assistant secretary for conservation, research and education, U.S. Department of Agriculture; Joe Nagel, assistant to the secretary, U.S. Department of Interior, and presidential assistant, Jack Watson. They are considered the number 2 or number 3 deputies in their departments.

Almost in one voice the Western governors expressed strong opposition to the entire spectrum of gasoline and oil allocations and controls, RARE II and wilderness areas, and many phases of public rangeland management.

Only Nagel, an Idahoan with Secretary of Interior Cecil D. Andrus, escaped much of the wrath of the Western chief executives. Maybe, it's because he is a westerner and was frank in stating he could not answer some questions.

Nagel received a strong boost when Utah Gov. Scott Matheson, head of the governor's water policy committee, said he had received nothing but the warmest support and cooperation from Nagel in seeking to work out a myriad of water and public land policies.

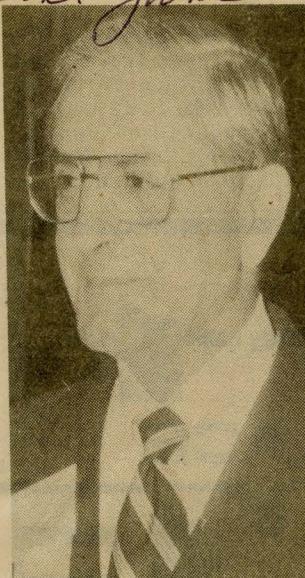
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Cutler did not make many friends among the Western governors for the Carter Administration.

Only Colorado Gov. Richard Lamm defended Cutler in his presentation of RARE II, but virtually all others, especially Washington Gov. Dixie Lee Ray, Oregon Gov. Victor Atiyeh; Nevada Gov. Robert List and Montana Gov. Tom Judge, were critical of Cutler.

The governors generally complained their input had been largely ignored and more wilderness area was designated in their states than they wanted.

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SUN VALLEY — Jack O'Leary, deputy secretary for the Department of Energy, was sharply criticized this week by Western governors over the way the DOE is handling the gasoline and oil fuel shortages, prices and allocations.

Cutler took only about 10 minutes to answer the charges, then abruptly cancelled further discussions by saying he had to catch a plane. A few boos were heard from the audience.

Cutler pointed out that of 62 million acres, only 15.5 million were designated for wilderness, 11 million for further study and a whopping 35.5 million for non-wilderness.

However, many governors contended that many of the millions not designated for wilderness would be tied up for years, such as those placed on

the back burner for further study, and even the millions not considered for wilderness.

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O'Leary fared a little better but not much, in his discussions on gasoline supplies, which he described as indeed gloomy. He predicted supplies will be no better and maybe even less, than at the present time, unless this nation can embark on a stringent conservation program or find new sources of oil.

Many of the governors, particularly Ayiteh, List, and Miss Ray, accused the administra-

tion of locking up too much land area for proper development.

Ayiteh angrily charged O'Leary and the administration with lack of credibility because of so many conflicting guidelines, a charge O'Leary hotly denied.

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Watson, who is in constant communication with most governors, also escaped much of the criticism that was heaped on O'Leary and Cutler.

Watson spoke to the governors at a noon luncheon where only a few newsmen were present, and not at the general session. He also painted a pessimistic gasoline picture, agreeing with O'Leary it would never be abundant again, such as in the 60s and early 70s.

He did reveal a program that is planned to improve economic, housing, health and employment conditions in rural America.

Another administration speaker, Omi Walden, a DOE assistant secretary, told of non-controversial plans for the nation's first-ever small town and rural development policy.

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Whether the administration complies with some of the major resolutions will determine the clout of the governors.

Among the major resolutions are ones urging a federal mandatory allocation and price controls on diesel fuel, a summit-type DOE conference with states participating on disposal for radioactive wastes, a state-federal cost-sharing legislation for water projects, improved assistance to small business, RARE II multiple uses, expand low-cost housing and enacting a \$3 credit on every barrel of oil-shale produced.