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## **Gov. Gregoire announces new state export initiative** *Initiative designed to increase state exports, create jobs*

**OLYMPIA** – Gov. Chris Gregoire today announced a new state export initiative designed to open additional export opportunities for Washington businesses and create jobs. The initiative complements the National Export Initiative, President Obama's ambitious plan to double the nation's exports by 2015, and commits Washington state to working with the US Department of Commerce as it implements the federal initiative.

"As one of the nation's leading exporting states, Washington state has the ability to act as a testing ground as the US Department of Commerce develops new programs to move the National Export Initiative forward," Gregoire said. "Washington is the gateway to Asia, and those trading partners have not been hit as hard as other areas around the world. We need to continue to increase our efforts to reach out to those trading partners. When our companies have more opportunities to do business, they can expand and create more good jobs for our communities."

Over the next five years, Gregoire expects the state export initiative to increase the number of Washington state companies exporting by 30 percent and help 5,000 Washington businesses achieve \$600 million in new export sales.

"Increasing the export of American products and services to global markets can help revive the fortunes of U.S. companies, spur future economic growth and support jobs in the U.S.," said U.S. Commerce Secretary Gary Locke. "I applaud Governor Gregoire and Washington state for partnering with us on the National Export Initiative, and look forward to working with the state."

Gregoire's 6-point plan includes:

- Working as partners with the U.S. Department of Commerce to identify new opportunities for our businesses, serving as a pilot state for "field testing" new programs and tools the federal government develops as a part of the National Export Initiative;
- Directing the Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB) to dedicate \$3 million in funding toward export counseling assistance to companies seeking to export for the first time;

- Implementing a “Farm-to-Market Initiative” to reward ambitious and achievable proposals to enhance the competitiveness of our agricultural enterprises in the global marketplace. It will ask nearly 20 existing state programs to compete for development funds, ensuring we make the most promising investments in this important industry;
- Enhancing our standing as a destination for foreign students who invest in our economy through tuition, lodging and entertainment and encourage Washington students to study abroad; and
- Strengthening and expanding relationships with overseas trading partners. This September, Gregoire will lead a trade mission to Asia to visit the World Expo in Shanghai, stop in other Chinese cities and visit Vietnam, an emerging market for our companies.
- Engaging with the federal government to ensure a fully-funded federal transportation reauthorization act that includes a national freight program aimed at infrastructure investments that enhance our ability to efficiently move goods. This program would match the commitment the state has already made on projects such as the Columbia River Crossing in Vancouver, the North Spokane Corridor, which directs freight to Canada, and the SR 519 project serving the Port of Seattle.

Gregoire announced the state export initiative at the Port of Seattle Headquarters along with Department of Agriculture Director Dan Newhouse and Commerce Director Rogers Weed.

“We already export a broad diversity of Washington-grown food products to consumers around the world,” said WSDA Director Dan Newhouse. “The Governor is offering our industry an opportunity to increase these exports, expand our industry and increase jobs, especially in rural communities, with products from apples to wine and oysters to wheat. Working with our resourceful, innovative farmers, ranchers and food processors, we can meet this challenge.”

“Taking the lead among all states with this early commitment to the National Export Initiative is good for Washington because it builds on our core strengths,” said Washington State Commerce Director Rogers Weed. “Expanding opportunities for our state’s current exporters will generate growth in the near term, while future sales and jobs will come from a new focus by the Small Business Development Centers and other key partners to find and help some of the 96 percent of other Washington companies reach international markets with their products and services.”

With 8,000 Washington companies currently exporting, the state is the largest U.S. exporter on a per capita basis. Approximately four percent of Washington companies export, compared to a national average of one percent. One in three jobs in Washington state are tied to trade, either directly or indirectly.

For companies seeking export assistance, Washington’s Department of Commerce has set up a dedicated email account to answer your questions. Contact them at [trade@commerce.wa.gov](mailto:trade@commerce.wa.gov).