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California joins other states, provinces in climate change agreement

By CHRIS MEGERIAN

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Gov. Jerry Brown signed an agreement Tuesday with leaders from 11 other states and countries pledging cooperation to battle climate change.

"This global challenge requires bold action on the part of governments everywhere," Brown said in a statement. "It's time to be decisive. It's time to act."

The agreement includes the states of Oregon, Washington and Vermont, as well as the provinces of British Columbia and Ontario in Canada, the states of Baja California and Jalisco in Mexico, and the British country of Wales. Also involved are states and provinces in Brazil, Germany, and Spain.

"We will strive to bring more states into this agreement," Brown said at the event.

Although the terms are not legally binding, by signing the agreement the leaders are committing to specific targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. At that point, emissions would either need to be at least 80% below 1990 levels, or less than 2 metric tons per capita.

California already has a 2050 target, which was set by former Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Brown has built on that effort by setting an interim goal for 2030. And in his inaugural address in January, he called for more renewable energy, lower gasoline consumption and better efficiency in older buildings.

The governor has tried to position California as a pacesetter in the fight against climate change in the run-up to an international summit later this year in Paris, which he plans to attend.

When detailing the state's climate change goals in Los Angeles, Brown said, "I've set a very high bar, but it's a bar we must meet. It's a bar not only for California, but it's a goal for other states, for the United States as a whole, and for other nations around the world."

Robert Weisenmiller, who leads the California Energy Commission, said at Tuesday's event that he's hopeful the state's partnerships can influence conversations in Paris and move the needle toward more aggressive action.

"We've been able to demonstrate that it's possible to grow the economy and have cleaner air," he said.
"We can stand as that marker for the world ... that these policies can work."