



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

---

## **WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT**

---

**TITLE** Visit to San Francisco – February 2013

**DATE** 18 February 2013

**BY** Rt. Hon Carwyn Jones, First Minister

Members will be aware that I was in San Francisco last week with a trade mission to promote Wales and explore opportunities for us to develop stronger links and encourage US businesses to consider Wales as a suitable place to set up a base for their UK or EU operations.

The United States is the largest single destination for UK exports and is one of the biggest markets for Wales in terms of international trade. We have a strong record of attracting significant foreign investment and have become a hub in Europe for electronics, avionics, pharmaceuticals, high-value manufacturing, financial services and insurance.

The West Coast is the technology capital of the world and presents major opportunities for Wales and Welsh companies, particularly in the fields of life sciences and creative industries, areas where Wales has strengths.

San Francisco presents the best place on the West Coast for us to open an office and this was announced during my visit. Our presence in San Francisco will provide the opportunity for Wales to be promoted continuously throughout the area. We are in the process of recruiting a suitable person to run that office and we hope to make the appointment in the next month or so.

I was accompanied by a Welsh trade mission of 18 trade missionaries, representing 19 companies – including pharmaceutical services, a playground equipment manufacturer, music & the arts, a car components manufacturer. Some had visited San Francisco before while others were visiting the market for the first time. The group stressed the importance of government and business working together and several felt that the trade mission had exceeded expectations in terms of contacts made. Being part of a group helped to not only sell their products or services but sell Wales as well.

Some have promising leads for future business, while others have opportunities that may take longer. We will be keeping in touch with them over the coming months to monitor how these interests develop.

During the visit I met a number of companies with existing operations in Wales. Among these were Hydro Industries, which is based in Llangennech and I was pleased to announce that the company has signed a joint venture with T&T Salvage based in Houston. Both the President and Vice President of T&T flew to San Francisco to complete the deal which will see unique products developed in Wales have an impact throughout the United States market. It is forecast that about 100 jobs will be created at Llangennech with about 70% being permanently based there, the remainder, while employed locally, deployed to salvage operations and others being engaged in research and development activity.

Other meetings included discussions with Hewlett Packard to discuss future opportunities in Wales; FireEye, a cyber security company; RocketSpace which is an accelerator workspace for seed-funded technology start-ups; Hydra DX which is already working with Bangor University; and Silicon Valley Bank to explore opportunities for its clients to invest in Welsh business. I also visited the Mission Bay Research Hub which is designed to enhance California's national and global competitiveness by stimulating partnerships, economic development, and job creation around specific research clusters.

I met representatives from the Governor's office and the Mayor of San Francisco, Edwin Lee. I hosted a working breakfast for key sports and business executives who have experience of managing major events in the San Francisco area – America's Cup, US Open and the Super Bowl. I also hosted a lunch for representatives of the media and travel trade to set out what Wales has to offer for visitors. A number of them had already visited Wales and reported positive experiences, some of these had been included in travel books and articles that have been published in the US.

The visit identified a number of opportunities that we must follow up if we want to make the most of putting Wales on the map. As a small nation we cannot cover every country in the world so we need to focus our efforts in the markets that present the best opportunities for our universities and businesses. This cannot be done solely from Wales – we have to be visible in markets and the only way to do that is to take the time and visit to promote Wales to the fullest extent.