

Chair Mary Nichols
California Air Resources Board
1001 I Street
Sacramento, CA 95812

April 10, 2017

Re: Quantitative Scoping Plan Goal for Natural and Working Lands

Dear Chair Nichols, members of the Board, and ARB staff,

We are writing as part of the science community in California to underscore the importance of your ongoing leadership to mitigate climate change and support further action to ensure that the state's natural and working lands are an effective part of the state's climate strategy and 2030 greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction goals. Specifically, we encourage you to set an initial, quantifiable goal for GHG emission reductions from conservation and management of natural and working lands. Such a goal should be supported by a statewide GHG inventory and a framework for monitoring and reporting progress over time.

The state's lands – its forests, urban forests, rangelands, wetlands, and agricultural lands – have a significant impact on the state's carbon balance. One study found that the emissions associated with carbon stock change in California's forests, grasslands and shrublands is on par with the average long-term emissions from residential natural gas usage in California¹. Yet, it is possible to protect and enhance sequestration capacity and reduce emissions through a variety of management interventions. These include interventions such as reducing the conversion of land to more intensified uses, restoring forests and grasslands, reducing the risk of catastrophic wildfire, increasing urban forest canopy cover, and increasing soil carbon stocks through changes in agricultural practices. Moreover, these climate-beneficial actions can also support critical benefits to people and nature, including enhanced water and air quality, habitat for fish and wildlife, recreation, and food and wood production, among others.

For the state's natural and working lands to have a material and positive impact on the state's long-term climate goals, it is essential for the state to support management interventions that can help address climate change by providing clear and actionable guidance in its Scoping Plan Update and policies. Including a quantifiable GHG reduction goal from natural and working land conservation and management represents a strong commitment from CARB that will not only help California meet its own climate change commitments, but it would help increase action globally.

Thank you for your consideration, and for your ongoing leadership in confronting climate change.

Sincerely,

¹ Gonzalez, P. et al. 2015. Aboveground live carbon stock changes of California wildlands ecosystems, 2001-2010. *Forest Ecology and Management*. 348:68-77

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