



March 8, 2013

bay area urban forest <sup>ecosystem</sup> council

Ms. Shelby Livingston  
Chief, Climate Change Program Planning and Management Branch  
California Air Resources Board  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Investment of AB 32 Auction Proceeds in Urban Forestry Programs to reduce GHG emissions**

Dear Ms. Livingston:

I am writing on behalf of the professional urban and community forestry industry across California regarding potential investments of AB 32 auction revenues identified by the Air Resources Board's Draft Concept Paper, as well as the Governor's budget, specifically in urban forestry. The California Urban Forests Council, and our associated seven regional councils, represents those working on the day to day investment in the management and health of urban trees through to those active in scientific research demonstrating the many benefits and services urban greening delivers to our communities.

Investments in trees in both urban and rural communities, especially in disadvantaged communities where tree canopy is disproportionately low, will help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through reduced energy demand and reduced urban heat island effect. According to studies by the U.S. Forest Service, California's existing urban forests reduce greenhouse gas emissions by about 6.3 million metric tons per year through combined energy savings, reduced urban heat island effect, and carbon sequestration. In hot, dry climates, shade from trees can cut energy use for cooling by 30%. The Forest Service has also documented that the cooling power of California's existing urban trees lowers our energy consumption by about 7,300 GWh each year, which is equivalent to more than seven 100 megawatt power plants. In addition, by serving as a wind buffer, urban and community forests can save 10-25% in energy used for heating.

In addition to delivering greenhouse gas emission reductions in California's rural and urban communities statewide, a wealth of research documents that urban forests also provide key health, safety, environmental, and economic co-benefits – all of which can especially help meet the needs of disadvantaged communities.

There is an existing Urban Forestry program within the Resource Management Division of the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. While this program has the existing infrastructure in


place to deliver projects statewide, their project funding was exhausted in last year's State Budget allocation. They continue to work statewide on technical assistance and are ready to deliver greenhouse gas emission reductions projects and much needed co-benefits to California's communities. We ask that the Board consider making AB 32 investments in this program.

Also, as you consider investments in the water-energy nexus, sustainable communities, urban forestry and urban greening provide greenhouse gas emissions reductions through these types of investments as well by aiding in the capture and use of stormwater for local water supply, thereby reducing imported water demand and the associated greenhouse gas emissions. Similarly, by providing a mechanism for greening and shading bike lanes and pedestrian facilities in urban environments, urban forests are encouraging active transportation alternatives that can result in reduced vehicle miles travelled and reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

We see a tremendous opportunity for investments in urban forests in California that will help meet the goals and objectives of AB 32, AB 1532, SB 375, and SB 535, and acknowledge the Board for recognizing this opportunity in the Concept Paper and the Governor's proposed budget. These investments will deliver quantifiable energy conservation benefits, spur economic development through job creation and job training, and help build healthier California communities.

We encourage the Air Resources Board to ensure that investments will result in greenhouse gas emission reductions that are supported by sound science and implemented with a level of transparency that ensures a net benefit to mitigating climate change. Thank you for your time and consideration of these important opportunities to invest in reducing greenhouse gas emissions while also investing in our communities and the health of California's residents.

Sincerely,



Nancy J. Hughes  
Executive Director

**In collaboration with:**

Bay Area Urban Forest Ecosystem Council  
Central Coast Urban Forests Council  
Inland Urban Forest Council  
Sacramento Urban Forests Council  
San Diego Regional Urban Forest Council  
San Joaquin Valley Urban Forest Council  
Street Tree Seminar/Los Angeles-Orange County Urban Forests Council

**California Urban Forests Council**

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