

Workshop on the Proposed Rice Cultivation Offset Protocol and Updates to Existing Offset Protocols

Environmental Analysis

The Air Resources Board (ARB) is the lead agency for the proposed regulation and is preparing an environmental analysis (EA) pursuant to its regulatory program certified by the Secretary of the Natural Resources Agency (14 CCR 15251(d); 17 CCR 60000-60008.) That portion of ARB's regulatory program that involves the adoption, approval, amendment, or repeal of standards, rules, regulations, or plans has been certified by the Secretary of Resources Agency pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21080.5 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (14 CCR 15251(d)). Public Resources Code section 21080.5 exempts public agencies with certified regulatory programs from certain CEQA requirements, including but not limited to preparing environmental impact reports, negative declarations, and initial studies (14 CCR 15250). ARB conducts its lead agency CEQA review as part of the Staff Report prepared for any proposed actions subject to CEQA (17 CCR 60000-60008). The resource areas from the CEQA Guidelines Environmental Checklist are used as a framework for assessing the potential for significant adverse impacts (17 CCR 60005(b)).

At the Workshop, staff will provide an overview of ARB's process for preparing the environmental analysis and its content. Staff welcomes public input at the workshop on the appropriate scope and content of the EA at the beginning of our process, including the reasonably foreseeable methods of compliance with the proposed regulation, the potential significant adverse impacts associated with the methods of compliance, potential feasible mitigation measures, and feasible alternatives to the proposal that could reduce or eliminate any significant adverse impacts.

A draft of the EA for the new Rice Protocol will be released for public review and comment as an Appendix to the Staff Report: Initial Statement of Reasons, along with the proposed regulation later in the year. A draft of the EA for the updates to the existing Ozone Depleting Substances, Livestock, Mine Methane Capture, and U.S. Forest Protocols will also be released for public review and comment as a Chapter in the Staff Report: Initial Statement of Reasons, along with the updated protocols.