

September 21, 2010

Ms. Mary Nichols, Chair
California Air Resources Board
1001 I Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support CARB staff recommended SB 375 targets

Dear Chairwoman Nichols:

As business and community leaders, we strongly urge the California Air Resources Board (CARB) to adopt the SB 375 targets recommended in your staff's August 9th, 2010 report. Effective implementation of SB 375 is vital to California's economic recovery, the creation of jobs, the protection of public health, and the continued high quality of life for our state's residents.

The staff recommendations follow an extensive public outreach and engagement process conducted by CARB and the MPOs. The outreach and engagement events were held around the State and were widely publicized to the public and to those stakeholders who have previously been involved with this issue. Hundreds of people attended these meetings. At these public hearings and public workshops, expert technical, economic, and policy analysis of SB 375 were presented. They built upon the process established by the bipartisan Regional Targets Advisory Committee, comprised of stakeholder group representatives, following nine months of study. The public was provided with significant opportunities for input and overwhelmingly positive comments were offered by hundreds of individuals and organizations. Given the wide range of public input, the staff recommendations represent a reasonable compromise in CARB's effort to meet the statutory requirement to adopt "ambitious and achievable" targets under SB 375.

Adopting these targets will provide Californians with the housing choices they want, greater opportunities to reduce their commutes to work and school, and more viable transportation choices. We believe these steps will lead to significant benefits for California including:

1. Improve public health by reducing air pollution and providing additional opportunities for exercise. According to the American Lung Association of California, effective implementation of SB 375 can help Californians each year avoid up to 140 premature deaths, 105,000 asthma attacks and respiratory symptoms, and \$1.66 billion in avoided public health care costs by 2035.
2. Help meet our future water needs and reduce the economic harm and job losses that result from future droughts. By encouraging growth that uses water more efficiently, California can reduce future demand by several million acre-feet of water, according to analysis prepared for the State's Strategic Growth Council. This will help accommodate more housing despite our limited water supplies and help buffer our economy from future water shortages.

3. Save Taxpayers Money by Reducing Infrastructure Costs: California's current growth patterns are inefficient. By leveraging existing infrastructure and reducing the number of new roads, sewers and other public works that must be built, taxpayers and local governments can save billions of dollars in avoided costs.
4. Reduce Traffic Congestion: Building homes closer to jobs and providing more transportation options will help reduce traffic congestion. Effective targets will reduce the time commuters must spend in traffic each year by well over one million hours per year by 2035 in the Southern California region alone, saving the economic equivalent of \$7.7 billion dollars annually, according to analysis conducted by SCAG staff.

By encouraging regional plans that provide Californians with more housing and transportation choices, CARB has an important opportunity to achieve significant public health benefits while reducing taxpayer costs, improving our quality of life, and helping to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

For these reasons, we urge you to approve the staff recommended regional targets for SB 375.

Sincerely,

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Meera Balakumar
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