



December 14, 2015

Dear Air Resources Board:

On behalf of the School Energy Coalition (SEC), an organization made up of K-14 schools and associate members focused on energy and water efficiency projects for California's students, I am writing to provide comments on the Cap and Trade Auction Trade Proceeds Investment Plan in anticipation of the December 17, 2015 hearing.

SEC appreciates the changes that have recently been made to the Cap and Trade Investment Plan (CTIP) recommending that school projects become an active part of the state's strategy for auction revenue to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, thus addressing the very serious issue of global climate change.

With over 10,000 school buildings in over 1,000 school districts throughout the state SEC believes that California schools should be key partners in assisting the state to meet GHG reduction targets. According to the Collaborative on High Performing schools (CHPS), one in five Californians spends their day in a K-12 school and schools contribute roughly 5-8% of California's GHG emissions.

In addition, we urge that a new energy and water school grant program be considered along with funding for technical assistance for schools who wish to build upon the energy efficiency work they are already doing under the Proposition 39 program. We have a unique opportunity to leverage the timely work that is being done under program such as baseline data, analysis, and benchmarking that are required for Proposition 39 funding.

This program is allowing schools to take the first steps toward better and more efficient use of energy, but this funding does not go far enough to do the deep retrofits that could make a real difference toward lowering GHG throughout the state. Schools are poised to do so much more with regard to efficiency and renewable – and now more than ever schools are poised to attain “zero net energy” status.

Water projects should also be a priority because we know that it takes an extraordinary amount of energy to move water to where it is needed. Public school districts are often in charge of many acres of lawn in cities and towns across the state – and have been identified as large water users by water districts.

Projects that conserve or more efficiently use or re-use water will contribute greatly to lowered greenhouse gas emissions and educating the users of tomorrow, our students. Schools are already struggling to meet the state's emergency water mandates while keeping up playfields and ensuring that they are safe for students and other community members who may share these facilities.

In addition, funding for addressing long-term ongoing water use through landscaping and infrastructure - such as purple pipe - could go a long way toward allowing schools to take real, permanent action and save millions of gallons of water annually. We are also able to easily identify those schools in disadvantaged communities through our free and reduced price meal data.

Finally, we ask that a thorough review of existing energy, water and transportation programs be made to ensure that school projects specifically have priority access or separately designated funding under the plan. Schools already have state agency partnerships with the Department of Education, the California Energy Commission, and now the Water Board on programs such as Prop 39 and the Drought Response Outreach Program for Schools (DROPS).

Schools are a sure way to ensure that every community has public projects that they can be proud of and teaches consumers of tomorrow about conservation and efficiency to address climate change. We look forward to working with you to ensure that schools are an active part of the plan to lower greenhouse gas emissions throughout California.

Sincerely,



Anna Ferrera  
Executive Director