**The California Green Business Program: Government and Small Businesses Working Together to Create a Green Economy**

The California Air Resources Board has done a wonderful job reaching out to stakeholders and the public to listen to all ideas and concepts regarding Cap and Trade Proceeds. I very much appreciate this opportunity to voice an idea that is shared by 21 local jurisdictions and over 2700 small to medium sized businesses in California.

Small businesses collectively play a large role in California. They are the largest employer and they have demonstrated a strong interest in both environmental and community improvement. Although small businesses are vital to the California economy, more often than not they are hit by government fees, inspections, and strict permit and licensing requirements that are more appropriately scaled toward larger businesses. One of the few programs that positively links government and the small business community is the Green Business Program.

The Green Business Program incentivizes businesses to improve environmental performance, while also fostering environmental awareness amongst their employees and community. Government run Green Business Programs provide technical assistance and rebates, as well as promotion to these Green Businesses. From Alan Rice Automotive in Soquel, "We chose to participate in the Green Business Program because we believe playing an active role in preserving the environment is an important aspect to conducting business. We have always paid close attention to minimizing the impact my business leaves and are now better able to communicate that to our customers." From Bay Building Janitorial, "We conduct our business with respect and care for our environment and implement strategies that achieve the greatest benefit for everyone. The Green Business Program has proven to be a valued partner in achieving these goals." From Charlie Hong Kong Restaurant in Santa Cruz, ""Our intention is to operate our business in a sustainable manner. We follow the core values: to conserve, protect, and respect the environment natural and human. We are committed to serving organic food, buying locally grown produce and using local venders as much as possible. We appreciate the recognition and collaboration of other businesses. Thank you to the County and City of Santa Cruz for taking on this important project."

The Green Business Program measures their success through a central web-based database system. Approximately 2700 businesses throughout the state have so far reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 171,677 tons and saved 38,254,747 kWhrs, among many other metrics. However, the database and the statewide function of the Green Business Program was formerly supported by the State Department of Toxic Substances Control, which is no longer capable of supporting the program. Funding is needed to both maintain the central reporting feature and to continue to foster new Green Business Program to blossom throughout the state.

Please consider a mechanism to utilize Cap and Trade proceeds to fund the California Green Business Program. Direct reporting of GHG emissions reductions will result, and it will bolster our small businesses and the communities in which they operate. Thanks very much for your consideration.