



April 10, 2017

The Honorable Mary Nichols  
Chair, California Air Resources Board  
1001 I Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: 2030 SCOPING PLAN UPDATE**

Dear Chair Nichols and Board Members:

We would first like to thank the Air Resources Board for the opportunity to provide comments on the 2030 Scoping Plan Update. The undersigned organizations work directly with and support disadvantaged communities throughout the San Joaquin and East Coachella Valleys. We believe that in order for California to reach its climate goals and for communities to experience real benefits and improvements, we must consider and plan for the distinct challenges environmental justice communities are faced with. We provide the following comments to help strengthen the Scoping Plan document and ensure that these communities are a critical part of the strategy to achieve significant greenhouse gas reductions.

We believe ARB can better balance the concerns of environmental justice communities with the state's climate goals in three ways: (1) amending the current system to directly reduce emissions in disadvantaged communities, (2) ensuring equity through improved transit operations and land use planning, and (3) more closely coordinating with other state agencies to implement climate adaptation and mitigation programs.

**A. Amending the Current System**

Carbon offsets provide industry with compliance flexibility, but result in outsourced benefits and negative impacts on California's disadvantaged communities. According to a recent study, the Cap and Trade program has allowed in-state emissions to rise, with California's largest greenhouse gas (GHG) emitters reporting increases in their localized emissions since 2011<sup>1</sup>. The report also found these high-emitting facilities more likely to use out-of-state offset projects to meet their emission reduction

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<sup>1</sup> Lara J. Cushing, et al., *A Preliminary Environmental Equity Assessment of California's Cap and Trade Program*. 2016.  
[http://dornsife.usc.edu/assets/sites/242/docs/Climate\\_Equity\\_Brief\\_CA\\_Cap\\_and\\_Trade\\_Sept2016\\_FINAL2.pdf](http://dornsife.usc.edu/assets/sites/242/docs/Climate_Equity_Brief_CA_Cap_and_Trade_Sept2016_FINAL2.pdf)

obligations - rather than directly reducing emissions. Because regulated GHG-emitting facilities, especially the highest-emitting sources, are more often located in neighborhoods with higher proportions of residents of color and residents living in poverty, the cap-and-trade program has allowed for increased harm to disadvantaged communities while outsourcing California's potential climate and health benefits.

For example, carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions from the oil and gas producer Berry Petroleum operating in Kern county have consistently risen since 2011<sup>2</sup>. The criteria pollutants PM<sub>2.5</sub> and oxides of nitrate (NO<sub>x</sub>) have risen alongside CO<sub>2</sub>, increasing smog and particulate matter formation in nearby communities and in the entire air basin. For PM<sub>2.5</sub>, the San Joaquin Air basin is the most polluted region in the nation, with Bakersfield in Kern county ranked as the most polluted city in the country. Kern County and areas like it are exactly the communities that cannot endure further increases in pollution and should benefit, not lose, from California's climate programs.

The current system does little to protect the wellbeing of environmental justice communities, but rather furthers their vulnerability to climate change and threatens public health. Equity co-benefits of the program could be enhanced if direct emission reductions are prioritized and facilities are required to reduce on-site emissions instead of relying on the overuse of offsets.

## **B. Equitable Transportation and Land Use Planning**

The Scoping Plan identifies electrification of vehicles as a critical strategy to achieving our climate goals. Currently, this widespread use of zero-emission vehicles (ZEVs) is more common in metropolitan, urban cities such as Sacramento, Los Angeles, and the San Francisco Bay Area. Electric vehicles have not infiltrated the San Joaquin Valley due largely in part to a) the lack of effective outreach to disadvantaged communities and rural communities about available funding opportunities and b) lack of investment in ZEV charging infrastructure. To promote widespread ownership of ZEVs in disadvantaged, low-income communities, much more must be done in terms of outreach to existing programs and opportunities such as ARB's Scrap and Replace and the Clean Vehicle Rebate Program (CVRP). New vehicles are highly unaffordable for most low-income families, and while programs such as CVRP exist to ease the cost burden of this investment, most residents are not aware of them. ARB must work with partner agencies and stakeholders to ensure that outreach is targeted to disadvantaged communities, and rural communities specifically, who could benefit from the greenhouse gas reductions that result from large-scale electrification of vehicles. Additionally, investment must be directed to these communities to fund infrastructure to support the demand for ZEVs, as currently the scarcity of charging stations deters buyers from purchasing electric cars.

Many communities in the San Joaquin Valley and the Eastern Coachella Valley, both rural and urban, are severely lacking in active transportation infrastructure. This includes, bike lanes, sidewalks, street lights, walk paths and trails. According to CARB's 2014 Greenhouse Gas Inventory, transportation

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<sup>2</sup> California Air Resources Board, Integrated Emissions Visualization Tool. [https://justtransit.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Just-Transit-Release\\_Final.pdf](https://justtransit.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Just-Transit-Release_Final.pdf)

contributes nearly 37% to California's total greenhouse gas emissions<sup>3</sup>, so robust investment in active transportation is critical to reducing emissions from this sector and creating meaningful transportation options for disadvantaged communities.

Land use planning in the San Joaquin Valley is largely centered on large, sprawling new developments in the outskirts of cities and counties rather than infill development in existing communities and highway expansion rather than local road improvements. In the Scoping Plan Draft, ARB identifies sprawl and highway expansion as an issue for regional and local governments to take action on collaboratively. The currently on-going SB 375 target update process is an opportunity for ARB to address this and urge MPOs to align their projects with state goals to reduce VMTs. We recommend that the role of SB 375 and regional targets and planning be more thoroughly considered in the Scoping Plan as a strategy to achieve California's climate goals. We would like to emphasize EJAC's recommendation to ARB that building new highways and expanding existing ones must not constitute as a greenhouse gas reduction strategy.

Many communities, such as the unincorporated rural community of Lanare in Fresno County, lack basic services like health clinics and grocery stores. Because of a lack of reliable, affordable public transit, residents are forced to drive their vehicle to access these services, thus increasing Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMTs). We suggest that reduced or waived transit passes for students, elderly, and youth be included as a strategy in the Scoping Plan as well as commitments from ARB to improve transit resources to expand routes, provide bus stops with shelters and lights, and increase frequency of buses.

Additionally, ARB must carefully consider the benefits of alternative modes of public transit, such as vanpool programs, to serve the needs of rural communities. For example, the community of Cantua Creek was recently awarded a grant to fund a community-lead vanpool project called *Van Y Vienen* that would provide zero emission vans to connect residents to nearby cities<sup>4</sup>. We recommend that ARB include community-driven programs such as this and use successful project examples as models to include in the Scoping Plan, as well how these projects could be successful in rural and urban areas.

We also believe that the transportation funding bill, SB 1, must align with state climate goals and incorporate equitable investment. This means that priority must be given to projects that will reduce emissions from transportation, including passenger vehicles through VMTs and emissions from the freight sector. Funds must be directed to active transportation, public transit, and road improvements in disadvantaged communities.

### **C. Inter-Agency Collaboration**

The Scoping Plan currently makes virtually no reference to California Natural Resources Agency's Safeguarding California Plan, which outlines the state's strategy for building climate

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<sup>3</sup> California Air Resources Board, California Greenhouse Gas Emission Inventory. 2014 Total CA Emissions, Emissions by Economic Sector. <https://www.arb.ca.gov/cc/inventory/data/data.htm>

<sup>4</sup> Just Transit, *Just Transit Challenge Winners Announced*. 2017. [https://justtransit.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Just-Transit-Release\\_Final.pdf](https://justtransit.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Just-Transit-Release_Final.pdf)

adaptation. As stated in the 2009 Safeguarding California Plan, “many climate mitigation strategies, like promoting water and energy efficiency, are also climate adaptation strategies.”<sup>5</sup> The 2009 Plan also states that the adaptation strategy was built using the Scoping Plan and climate science as a framework, and therefore “closer coordination is needed” to implement the state’s climate adaptation and mitigation strategies. We believe that the Scoping Plan’s failure to integrate Safeguarding California demonstrates this lack of coordination and urge ARB to work more closely with the Natural Resources Agency, and other agencies, to foster more collaborative inter-agency relationships in the Scoping Plan.

SB 5 (De Leon) and AB 18 (Garcia), if passed, will provide bonds for climate adaptation programs to protect parks and water. To the extent that this legislation moves forward, the Scoping Plan must include these programs in a climate adaptation component.

Additionally, there are many climate mitigation and adaptation programs, within and outside of the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund. We suggest a streamlined “one-stop shop” for disadvantaged communities that brings together all funding and loan programs and assistance across all sectors. This ensures that environmental justice communities can be competitive when it comes to accessing funding for climate programs.

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Sincerely,

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<sup>5</sup> California Natural Resources Agency, 2009 California Adaptation Strategy.  
[http://resources.ca.gov/docs/climate/Statewide\\_Adaptation\\_Strategy.pdf](http://resources.ca.gov/docs/climate/Statewide_Adaptation_Strategy.pdf)