

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

RE: Draft Investment Plan for Cap-and-Trade Auction Revenues

Dear Chair Nichols:

Prevention Institute, a national non-profit organization focused on preventing injury and illness in the first place, strongly supports the efforts of the California Air Resource Board in developing a Cap and Trade Auction Proceeds Investment Plan. We appreciate the ambitious challenge of developing a forward-reaching statewide plan for protecting our environment and reducing pollutants while supporting the health and well-being of communities. Additionally, we are a member of the *Sustainable Communities for All* Platform, along with more than 50 other organizations representing a diverse set of issues across the state, and are excited that many recommendations made in the platform are in the draft investment plan.

We applaud the efforts of the California Air Resources Board, the Department of Finance, and other agencies involved in crafting the Draft Investment Plan and conducting a robust and expansive public process. This draft plan is a strong foundation for ensuring that greenhouse gas cap-and-trade auction revenues are invested in projects and programs that put us firmly on the path to meet our emissions reduction goals, maximize co-benefits, improve public health and the economy, and maximize health equity in communities.

California's economy, our quality of life, and our children's future all depend on people living in healthy, thriving communities. For example, studies have documented that the health costs associated with overweight, obesity, and physical inactivity in children and adults in California are upwards of \$41 billion annually.¹ To prevent illness and injury from happening in the first place, California needs to invest in projects that improve air quality, support safe places to play, decrease violence, and increase active transportation and access to healthy food. **That is why we are especially supportive of the plan's emphasis on achieving sustainable communities through investments in biking and walking, public transit, affordable homes near transit, energy efficiency and renewable energy for low-income households, urban forestry, and preservation of open space.**

To strengthen the plan, we respectfully urge ARB and DOF to expressly include *transit operations* as an investment priority in order to sustain and expand transit service levels and ridership. Over the last decade transit systems have suffered from wave after wave of funding cuts that have resulted in service cuts and fare increases. Low-income communities, seniors, disabled, youth, and other groups that depend on transit the most have been most impacted by these shortfalls. Regions throughout the state have ambitious plans to expand their transit systems, however they will need funding for operations or the full potential of our transit systems will not be realized to meet greenhouse gas reduction targets, improved economic growth, public health, or other key goals. As such, investments in the State Transit Assistance program and/or new operating grants are desperately needed.

We look forward to working with you to make the investment plan as strong as possible. Again, thank you for your leadership and the opportunity to provide this input.

Sincerely,

Jeremy Cantor, MPH
Program Manager, Prevention Institute
Menaka Mohan, MPH, MCRP
Program Coordinator, Prevention Institute

¹ The Economic Costs of Overweight, Obesity and Physical Inactivity Among California Adults – 2006. Center for Public Health Advocacy, 2009. Available at: <http://www.publichealthadvocacy.org/costofobesity.html>