*The following comments are in response to the California Air Resources Board white paper, “Scoping Next Steps for Evaluating the Potential Role of Sector-based Offset Credits Under the California Cap-and-trade Program, including from Jurisdictional “Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation” Programs, published October 19th, 2015 and workshop that took place on October 28th, 2015 in Sacramento, CA.*

**Climate Change: A Global Challenge with California Leading on Solutions**

People around the world – from business leaders to artists, mothers, fathers, and the Pope – are understanding the critical challenge of climate change and the urgency of the need to take action now. Human ingenuity and adaptation can only go so far within a reasonable time frame. Fortunately, we have a solution that works *now* as well as the institutional framework for implementing and financing forest conservation and management as a means of climate change mitigation: The UN negotiated Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation, REDD+. And the progression of REDD+ toward larger scales and increased integration with jurisdictional development has signaled a maturity and focus on long-term sustainability.

Now more than ever, the science is clear: *the single most important thing a government, a corporation, or an individual can do to take climate action now is to keep trees standing.*

Code REDD supports the conclusions of the REDD+ Offsets Working Group and supports the California Air Resources Board’s interest in continuing to pursue sector-based offsets such as REDD+ for inclusion California’s cap and trade program. REDD+ inclusion in California’s cap and trade system is an important step for scaling reliable finance for forest conservation as a critical and necessary mitigation activity.

Code REDD applauds California’s leadership on climate policy and REDD+. With the introduction of sector-based offset credits from jurisdictional REDD+ programs, California is poised to be *the* global leader on forest conservation, and California’s leadership has the ability to send signals to carbon markets and to REDD+ countries in need of sustainable funding.

onitoring, eporting, and erificationards As stated by the Verified Carbon Standard in their comments to the CARB, “This will be needed to ensure atmospheric integrity, maintain confidence in California’s Cap-and-Trade Program, and attract business interest and market investment in the sector.” We agree that the CARB require or give preference to credits that are issued under jurisdictional programs that employ proven, international best-practice accountingand crediting frameworks like VCS Jurisdictional and Nested REDD+ (JNR).

Code REDD reiterates its experience that the private sector, including the business and investment communities in California and abroad, as well as civil society, support REDD+. In 2013, Code REDD released its private sector letter of support for REDD+ that included regulated California companies such as Pacific Gas and Electric as well as major consumer facing brands such as Disney. Further, in April 2015 Code REDD launched its Stand for Trees crowdfunding platform and has since transacted nearly 45,000 tonnes of REDD+ credits to individual purchasers. This demonstrated citizen and corporate support for REDD+ is a powerful signal to California’s legislature that there is widespread popular support for forest conservation as a means of climate change mitigation and that the world’s forests are relevant to them.

Further REDD+, in the context of current standards and best practices, can have a transformational and positive impact on indigenous and local communities. Several REDD+ projects around the globe are even owned and managed by local and indigenous communities. REDD+ is a proven model for sustainable economic development that advances the newly minted Sustainable Development Goals. REDD+ harnesses a new model for development - one that challenges the traditional donor model and empowers indigenous and local communities to articulate a low carbon development path for themselves.

We thank the California Air Resources Board for considering sectoral-based REDD+ offsets and protecting the people of California and the tropical forests in which all of humanity benefits.

Regards,

Kate Levin

Executive Director, Code REDD