August 17, 2015

Chairman Mary D. Nichols and Executive Officer Richard Corey
California Air Resources Board
1001 I Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Chairman Nichols and Executive Officer Corey:

The Alliance of Regional Collaboratives for Climate Adaptation (ARCCA) welcomes the opportunity to provide comments on the **Joint Agency Symposium on Climate Goals and Natural and Working Lands**.

ARCCA is a network comprised of existing regional collaboratives from across California. ARCCA’s members represent leading regional collaboratives that are already coordinating and supporting climate adaptation efforts in their own regions in order to enhance public health, protect natural systems, build economies, and improve quality of life. Through ARCCA, member regional collaboratives have come together to amplify and solidify their individual efforts, as well as to give a stronger voice to regionalism at the state and federal levels. ARRCA members share information among regions on best practices and lessons learned; identify each region’s most innovative and successful strategies; and then determine how these strategies could be adapted to another region’s particular needs. As a result, ARRCA bolsters the efforts of member regional collaboratives and empowers those interested in forging new regional partnerships.

California has been tremendously successful in developing and executing mitigation strategies to respond to the challenge of climate change. In recent months, the urgency and opportunity of addressing climate change through accelerated mitigation and adaptation activities have become even more clear, as Governor Brown outlined in his recent Executive Order (B-30-15).

We are grateful to see the administration’s key principles and concepts reflected in the current draft, especially those related to climate impacts and resiliency. We are also very appreciative that the guidelines recognize the importance of coordination with local governments, as well as with rural communities. As we look to accelerate our greenhouse gas reductions across the state, we know you are aware of the challenges that managing farm and rangelands, forests, and wetlands to store carbon can present. To realize success, we encourage continued efforts from the State to engage and empower local communities, particularly in California’s rural areas, to take action and implement investments that strengthen the state’s overall economic, environmental, and social resilience. Additionally, taking a regional approach to climate adaptation to support greenhouse gas reduction goals is critical to protecting and managing land to minimize greenhouse gas emissions, increase carbon sequestration, and build resilience. Within these contexts, we offer a few broad comments that might strengthen the State’s management of natural resources to address climate change and achieve California’s climate goals.

It is clear that the State recognizes the critical role that rural communities play to help advance climate mitigation efforts. However, climate change impacts—including decreased snowpack, continued droughts, and more numerous and damaging wildfires—grow in severity while investments in important land and water resources to address those impacts, especially in the forested headwaters of the Sierra, declines. The well-being of all Californians is inextricably tied to the goods and services, such as clean water, clean air, carbon storage, and recreation, that are provided by resource-rich, rural areas; thus protecting California’s rural communities and regions is equally important to meeting long-term urban sustainability goals. Investment in the upper watershed is also critical to urban adaptation strategy to ensure reliability of water, energy, recreation, and other resources urban areas rely upon. Through ARCCA, both urban and rural areas are working together to begin changing how funds get allocated in annual budget discussions, future investment plans, and ongoing agency grant programs to ensure that more funding is available for rural projects that have statewide benefits.

Reducing our risks and increasing our capacity to respond and become more resilient to the changing climate will require a new and unprecedented degree of collaborative action throughout California. Climate change mitigation and adaptation conversations must occur at scales above city and county footprints to be relevant and most effective as an integrated, landscape-scale approach is required to properly manage the State’s natural and working lands to achieve California’s climate goals. Communities are already bound together at a regional scale by shared geography and mutual reliance on resources that span across jurisdictions, such as watersheds, forests, agricultural lands, rangelands, and grasslands, and regional adaptation efforts are more likely to have shared priorities and common goals with greater potential to have a more holistic impact that address the region’s needs. Adopting a regional approach that engages key stakeholders from all sectors—urban and rural, public and private, decision-makers and implementers—will be critical to respond to climate change quickly, effectively, and equitably.

Because adapting to climate change will require significant resource investments, great changes to the status quo, and engagement of people from all sectors of society, it is important to prioritize those actions that yield the greatest collective benefits. Managing natural and working lands to increase carbon sequestration presents a great opportunity to employ strategies that will yield co-benefits to California’s environment, economy, and public health, such as investing in urban greening to enhance carbon sequestration, increase energy efficiency, and improve air quality. We encourage the State to employ strategies that yield the greatest collective benefits by adopting landscape or watershed scale analyses, focusing on natural system function and services, and establishing a preference for green or nature-based responses to the maximum extent feasible.

We hope these comments are helpful to your efforts, and welcome the opportunity to provide additional clarification or support development of specific language as desired.

Sincerely,

**
Krista Kline
ARCCA Chair
*The Los Angeles Regional Collaborative for Climate Action & Sustainability*



Larry Greene
ARCCA Vice-Chair
*Capital Region Climate Readiness Collaborative*


Cody Hooven *The San Diego Regional Climate Collaborative*


Allison Brooks
*Bay Area Regional Collaborative and the Alliance for Climate Resilience*


Kerri Timmer *Sierra Climate Adaptation & Mitigation Partnership*