



CENTRAL VALLEY FARMLAND TRUST

PRESERVING FARMS THAT FEED THE WORLD

March 7, 2013



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Chairman Mary Nichols
California Air Resources Board
1001 "I" Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Chairman Nichols,

On behalf of the Central Valley Farmland Trust, I write to recommend the inclusion of farmland conservation in the cap-and-trade investment plan. Farmland conservation is a central component to achieving sustainable communities, reducing transportation related greenhouse gas emissions and avoiding GHG emissions associated with urban land.

The state currently lacks adequate funding for farmland conservation. The Governor's FY 2013-14 budget cuts funding for the California Farmland Conservancy Program (CFCP), a state program which helps to fund permanent conservation easements on eligible farmland. Moreover, state funding was cut a few years ago for the Williamson Act subvention payments, hurting the ability of counties to enroll new farmland into the conservation program. At a time when new development pressures from state infrastructure projects will result in farmland conversion and traditional development resumes, further converting farmland, the state lacks funding to make our farmland conservation policy tools work in our communities.

Therefore, we strongly recommend that a portion of cap and trade investments go to the following programs:

1. California Farmland Conservancy Program (CFCP)

The state Department of Conservation, Land Resource Protection Division, coordinates a farmland conservancy program that helps fund permanent conservation easements on eligible farmland.

The program was funded with bond allocations at \$4.8 million during the fiscal year 2011-12. The Governor's FY2013-14 eliminates funding for the program. In recent years program was funded at \$7 million annually.

Recommendation: Allocate cap-and-trade auction revenue to provide \$5-8 million for the CFCP



2. Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program

Currently funded by the Williamson Act cancellation fees via the Soil Conservation Fund, the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring program provides county government and other stakeholders with maps and data for analyzing the impacts on agricultural resources. This is a crucial technical service that informs planning decisions at the local level, including how to avoid development of prime agricultural lands. Fiscal year 2012-3 funding for the program, \$350,000, is below the full cost of carrying out the program, which is approximately \$1 million.

Recommendation: Allocate \$1 million in cap-and-trade revenue to fund the farmland mapping and monitoring program.

The CVFT is a private, non-profit 501 (c) (3) corporation. Our mission is to work with landowners and conservation partners to preserve agricultural lands in the Central Valley for future generations. Currently we work in Sacramento, San Joaquin, Stanislaus and Merced Counties.

If we are to achieve our AB 32 and SB 375 goals, we must protect California farmland which provides multiple climate, food security, environmental and economic benefits. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Bill Martin
Executive Director