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# Assembly California Legislature



**NANCY SKINNER**  
ASSEMBLYMEMBER, FIFTEENTH DISTRICT

COMMITTEES  
CHAIR, BUDGET  
BUSINESS, PROFESSIONS AND  
CONSUMER PROTECTION  
NATURAL RESOURCES  
PUBLIC SAFETY  
UTILITIES AND COMMERCE

October 17, 2013

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

Dear Chair Nichols,

I am concerned about the draft Mine Methane Capture (MMC) carbon offset protocol, initiated under AB 32 and the Cap and Trade Program. The protocol, as written, will subsidize coal mining, likely for export. I urge you to postpone indefinitely the adoption of the Protocol scheduled for the October 24-25 Board meeting until a comprehensive plan for methane emissions reduction in California has been developed and adopted by the Board.

The MMC only counts emissions at the mining operation and not emissions associated with the use or transport of the product. With US exports of coal reaching their highest levels in two decades and doubling from 2006 to 2011, the MMC could actually increase carbon emissions. I am skeptical that the MMC "offset" can balance the additional emissions associated with moving coal thousands of miles over land and sea only to be burned where there are few environmental and air protections.

Global climate change is accelerating and the primary cause is the burning of fossil fuels. We cannot have a policy that directly incentivizes coal mining. The best way to reach our AB 32 goals is to keep coal in the ground. California has already taken steps to dis-incentive the use of coal, but the draft MMC protocol undermines those efforts.

I am also concerned that the proposed MMC offset for active mines provides no direct benefits for Californians. AB 32 specifically instructs the Board to maximize environmental co-benefits for California, but since neither coal nor trona is mined in California, there can be no in-state co-benefits from the proposed offsets.

The draft AB 32 scoping plan recognizes that there is an urgent and scientifically sound reason for ARB to devote resources to a comprehensive plan to reducing emissions from short-lived greenhouse gas pollutants, especially methane. It makes little sense to expand the use of coal offsets when CARB hasn't taken the first steps to identify and adopt emission control measures to reduce methane emissions from fossil fuels in California.

Moreover, the most recent scientific evidence strongly argues for reducing California methane emissions to reduce the threat to public health and violations of state and federal ambient air quality standards for ozone. Whatever the merits of the proposed MMC protocol, its consideration is taking valuable time and staff resources away from the urgent need to get to work measuring methane and adopting emission control measures as quickly as practicable.

We therefore respectfully ask you to withdraw the MMC protocol from the Board's October agenda, and direct staff to immediately begin work on a measurement and emission reduction strategy for methane, and other short lived greenhouse gas pollutants. There is much to accomplish, and we look forward to working with you as we refocus and redouble our efforts to reduce the threat of global warming and protect public health from air pollution.

Sincerely,



NANCY SKINNER  
Assemblymember, 15<sup>th</sup> District