



August 18, 2015

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

RE: Cap & Trade Auction Proceeds: Draft Investment Plan

Dear Chairman Nichols:

On behalf of the numerous signatories listed below, I respectfully urge you to favorably consider investments relative to the 2017-18 Investment Strategy and Cap and Trade (C&T) auction proceeds (GGRF) that include co-benefits accrued through specified regional and local park and open space improvements and investments that yield quantifiable "greenhouse gas (GHG) benefits."

As you are keenly aware, the 2014-15 Budget Act and SB 862 of 2014 enumerated the manner in which the C&T proceeds contained in the budget were to be allocated. Sixty percent of the funds are to be continuously appropriated to specified programs and project types including High Speed Rail, Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities, and other important projects. The remaining forty percent is

subject to considerable legislative discretion. To this point, a modest amount of funds have been dedicated to natural resource related programs, including urban forestry and watershed, coastal wetlands, and mountain meadow enhancements. While these are important investment goals, absent from this allocation mix has been a funding commitment to provide park improvements throughout California at the state, regional, and local levels perhaps through a modified “Urban Greening” program that would be administered by the Strategic Growth Council.

California has not seen a “true” park and resources bond since 2002 (Proposition 40) and the historic investment that this state has made over the years has significantly diminished. Park infrastructure in this state is stressed, particularly at the state level, but also in our local communities, having been largely established in the 1960’s and 1970’s. Voters of this state were most generous in approving both Propositions 12 and 40 to reinvest in parks. However, there are many neighborhoods and communities remaining within the state that cannot access a quality outdoor experience.

Park and natural landscape-related GHG investments are value-added in nature as they provide co-benefits on several front including:

- Investment in the state’s economy and general welfare:
  - According to the Outdoor Business Association, the “outdoor economy” in this state represents an \$85 billion industry and is one of the largest economic sectors in the state employing over 700,000 Californians.
  - The California Department of Public Health states that 25.4% of California adults and 15.8% of adolescents are obese. Additionally, California has the highest obesity-related costs in the United States, estimated at \$15.2 billion. According to the National Recreation and Park Association, “Youth who engage in adequate amounts of physically active recreation are more likely to be at an appropriate weight and a reduced risk for later weight-related health problems.” We believe that more recreational space and improved space will reduce these statistics.
- Possible Urban Greening related investments for consideration that provide GHG benefits:
  - **Land Acquisitions:** Investment in the protection and proper stewardship of lands in urban, suburban, and rural areas which will assist in addressing future growth patterns that alter the human and physical landscape leading to GHG increases.
  - **Bringing Parks to People:** Investments in new park development near urban areas promotes reductions in Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMTs) given high use and visitation destination points, such as parks, can be more easily accessed by the general public thus reducing dependency on vehicles.
  - **Green Infrastructure/Passive Park Development:** Tree plantings, native landscaping, and non-motorized trail improvements within existing parks or proposed for new parks provide health (air quality and fitness) and sequestration benefits, as well as a variety of other ecosystem services.
  - **Hardscape Conversion:** Converting asphalt areas and blighted, energy inefficient, urban settings that otherwise induce heat island scenarios will lead to GHG reductions.
  - **Safe Routes to Parks:** Investing in non-motorized infrastructure that fosters human-powered travel options to destination points such as parks will also reduce GHG’s.

In terms of quantifying GHG benefits of park investment, we would refer you to the Trust for Public Land's commissioned study, "Quantifying the Greenhouse Gas Benefits of Urban Parks." This report identifies a host of investment types in our urban recreational landscapes that provide for GHG reductions and improvements. Additionally, other studies are underway that warrant collaboration with the California Air Resources Board to expedite the quantification of the GHG benefits associated with these types of investments.

This list of above referenced investments, while not exhaustive, are wholly within the spirit and stated priorities of Senate President pro Tem Kevin de León to create "Green Jobs" and promote a green economy. Further, many of the above identified funding opportunities could be undertaken by the California Conservation Corps and local job corps that provide skills to young Californians throughout the state – promoting an additional investment in our future workforce.

In closing, we would urge your favorable inclusion of these concepts in the next Investment Strategy. Given the direct benefits to the environment, our economy, and the wellness of our communities, we feel this is a wise investment.

For more information, please contact Doug Houston at (916) 447-9884.

Sincerely,



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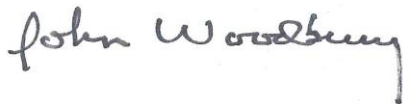
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