



MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

Los Angeles River Center & Gardens
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November 13, 2015

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

Comments on the Draft Cap-and-Trade Auction Proceeds Second Investment Plan

Dear Chair Nichols:

The Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) is grateful for this opportunity to provide comments to the California Air Resources Board with regard to the "Draft Cap-and-Trade Auction Proceeds Second Investment Plan: Fiscal Years 2016-17 through 2018-19" (Second Investment Plan).

The MRCA is a local government public entity established in 1985 pursuant to the Joint Powers Act. The MRCA is a local partnership between the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (Conservancy), which is a state agency established by the Legislature, and the Conejo Recreation and Park District and the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District, both of which are local park agencies established by the vote of the people in those communities.

The MRCA is dedicated to the preservation and management of local open space and parkland, watershed lands, trails, and wildlife habitat. The MRCA manages and provides ranger services for almost 72,000 acres of public lands and parks that it owns and that are owned by the Conservancy or other agencies and provides comprehensive education and interpretation programs for the public. The MRCA works in cooperation with the Conservancy and other local government partners to acquire parkland, participate in vital planning processes, and complete major park improvement projects.

The MRCA provides natural resources and scientific expertise, critical regional planning services, park construction services, park operations, fire prevention, ranger services, educational and leadership programs for thousands of youth each year, and is one of the lead agencies providing for the revitalization of the Los Angeles River.

Because of MRCA's dedication and long history of preservation and management of local open space, natural resources and parkland, the MRCA takes the threats climate change presents seriously and seeks proactively to implement climate change

mitigation and adaptation efforts. MRCA protects some of California's most at risk species and biodiversity from human encroachment, drought, pollution and climate change. The lands we own and manage for all Californians provide important local air quality, water quality and heat island mitigation for the local population, including many disadvantaged and environmental justice communities.

Looking towards climate change's future and existing threats and uncertainties, the MRCA has embarked on a research and planning program to investigate how parks, local planning, development and open space efforts can mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and implement cost-effective climate change adaptation measures. MRCA has worked closely on this program with the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy.

We appreciate your consideration of our comments on the first workshop, submitted on September 1, 2015 and referenced in Appendix C of the Cap-and-Trade Auction Proceeds Draft Second Investment Plan. MRCA continues to believe that its earlier suggestions remain relevant, which we incorporate by reference. These recommendations urged the California Air Resources Board and the Administration to provide incentives and resources that

- promote urban infill development;
- protect open space and natural lands;
- invest in programs that harvest the ecosystem services capabilities of natural and open space for recharge, storm water capture, water quantity and water quality projects as a means of accomplishing cost-effective energy savings for the State;
- encourage the establishment of greenbelts; and
- provide the open-air recreational and active transportation amenities necessary for making infill developments attractive and public transportation accessible.

In addition to those earlier recommendations, MRCA has one important additional recommendation: MRCA urges the expansion of the Strategic Agricultural Lands Conservation Program (SALCP) to include undeveloped and open spaces that meet similar conservation goals as agricultural land conservation.

As noted and implied above, the MRCA acquires, protects, restores and manages undeveloped land and open spaces and based on our continuing accomplishments we have become the "go to organization" for other governmental agencies throughout Los Angeles and Ventura Counties as both a resource and the lead agency. Land protection forms the core of MRCA's civic functions. MRCA views open space protection as key to curbing urban sprawl, providing recreation opportunities, limiting greenhouse gas emissions, and climate-smart planning. Open space managers, joint powers authorities,

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local governments, state conservancies and other entities could all play important roles in achieving the goals of SALCP in areas, like greater Los Angeles, that lack significant agricultural lands.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "George Lange", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the left.

George Lange, Chair
Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority