

Betsy Reifsnider

Help for Today...  
Hope for Tomorrow

Catholic Charities  
Diocese of Stockton

Elvira Ramirez  
Executive Director

February 24, 2010

Agenda item: 10-2-4

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Wilma Silva  
Chief Financial Officer  
Silva Plumbing Inc.

Antoinette Tull  
Director Property Administration  
Save Mart Supermarkets

The Honorable Mary Nichols, chair  
Members of the California Air Resources Board

Dear Chairman Nichols and Board Members:

On behalf of Catholic Charities, Diocese of Stockton, I urge you to strengthen the offset limits and to prioritize those offsets that you *do* allow to safeguard the health of Californians, especially those who live in communities already burdened by high levels of air pollution.

The Stockton Diocese was an early advocate of AB 32 and we continue to support its implementation. I should note that the national Catholic Health Association just published "Climate Change and Catholic Health Care" in which the Association calls on Catholic health facilities to advocate for policies that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and that specifically dedicate resources to help low income communities cope with climate change. One in six patients in acute care facilities in this country are in Catholic hospitals.

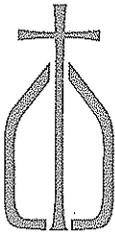
By allowing fewer carbon offsets, there will also be fewer co-pollutants and this will lead to cleaner air in places like the Central Valley and Sierra Foothills. Once again, in its State of the Air report, the American Lung Association gave four counties in the Stockton Diocese - San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Calaveras, and Tuolumne - the grade of "F" for high ozone levels. San Joaquin and Stanislaus Counties also received an "F" for particle pollution.

Finally, any offsets you *do* allow should target air quality benefits for communities already suffering from disproportionate levels of air pollution. The purchaser of any offsets should be required to keep the air quality benefits in the air basin in which the polluting industry is located.

Thank you for your consideration.

Betsy Reifsnider  
Environmental Justice Director





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**Agenda item: 10-2-9**

The Honorable Mary Nichols, chair  
Members of the California Air Resources Board

Dear Chairman Nichols and Board Members:

On behalf of Catholic Charities, Diocese of Stockton, I join with many other public health, environmental justice, and faith organizations in urging the Air Resources Board to develop its own in-house expertise on the offset protocol.

Some of the great strengths of the Air Resources Board, even in these terrible times of mandatory furloughs and slashed agency budgets, are the expertise, experience, and dedication of ARB's staff and the open, deliberative process of this Board.

Please do not outsource your offset responsibilities. Please maintain a public regulatory process for developing and approving protocols to comply specifically with AB 32. Please adopt protocols that are CEQA compliant. Please do not accept protocols developed for a voluntary market or a watered-down national standard. We've come so far with AB 32. Please do not falter now.

In the words of Pope Benedict XVI:

Before it is too late, it is necessary to make courageous decisions that reflect knowing how to recreate a strong alliance between man and the Earth. A decisive "yes" to the protection of creation is necessary, and a firm commitment to reverse those tendencies that run the risk of bringing about situations of unstoppable degradation.

Thank you for your consideration.

Betsy Reifsnider  
Environmental Justice Director

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