

Testimony of Environmental Defense Fund
concerning California's Low Carbon Fuel Standard,
before the California Air Resources Board
Delivered March 26, 2009, by Timothy O'Connor

Next month, the California Air Resources Board will be asked to vote on a regulation to assist the transformation of the state's motor vehicle fuel. As envisioned by the Governor's executive order and the CARB scoping plan, this regulation will create incentives to produce and use fuels with lower overall greenhouse gas impacts and will serve as a valuable complement to an overall cap on greenhouse gas emissions.

Over the past year, CARB staff and board members have heard from advocates on the critical issue the issue of indirect land use and how it should be treated under the standard. Environmental Defense Fund has deeply engaged in this discussion and we have sought to understand the issues of uncertainty, equity and environmental integrity that permeate the conversation. In July 2008, we organized a multi-day workshop in Berkeley, California to develop an unbiased understanding of lifecycle accounting for fuels and to have an honest discussion of all issues involved. That discussion, like many others, highlighted the need to engage in rigorous and accurate carbon accounting for all emissions from fuels, including quantifying and mitigating the leakage of emissions caused by indirect land use change.

Emissions associated with changing land use patterns represent a significant source of global greenhouse gases, and domestic fuel use can significantly affect those emissions. CARB has a duty to ensure that the Low Carbon Fuel Standard maintains environmental integrity. Simply omitting indirect land use emissions within the LCFS framework would undermine, if not fully negate, the environmental integrity of the rule by potentially promoting large GHG emission increases without also requiring some compensating reductions. It is crucial that the LCFS be implemented that achieves the net GHG emissions reductions intended and as necessary to help the state meet the climate protection goals of AB32.

Environmental Defense Fund supports the use of a quantitative metric attached to lifecycle analysis as a means to maintain the environmental integrity of the LCFS. As the LCFS is implemented, EDF is steadfastly committed to continue the important dialogue that CARB has commenced. We are committed to roll up our sleeves and work with government leaders, the agricultural community, scientists, and businesses to learn from the concerns of others and to work together as this program is carried out.