

November 4, 2009

Mary Nichols  
Chair, Air Resources Board  
1001 "I" Street  
P.O. Box 2815  
Sacramento, CA 95812

Dear Chairwoman Nichols and members of the board:

We urge you to adopt the comprehensive recommendations from the Regional Targets Advisory Committee (RTAC) at your November 19, 2009, meeting. Crafted by a representative group of stakeholders and your able staff, the RTAC report carefully balances greenhouse gas reduction goals with social equity considerations of the impacts on lower-income Californians.

The Kennedy Commission is a broad based coalition of community advocates focused on creating and increasing housing options available to Orange County's lowest income residents. More specifically, the mission of the Kennedy Commission is: to create the systemic change required to increase the production of housing for Orange County's extremely low-income households. The Commission's volunteers and staff strive to develop solutions to housing needs, to affirm the dignity of families of low and extremely low income and to unite communities across Orange County to support affordable housing development.

In Orange County, housing is unaffordable for most working families. The average median price for a home is \$499,999 and the Fair Market Rent for a two-bedroom apartment is \$1,546, making it one of the top ten least affordable rental markets in the nation (National Low Income Housing, 2009). Clearly homeownership and rentals are out of reach for lower income working families and they are greatly impacted by the lack of affordable housing opportunities. The lack of affordability of housing for working families in Orange County forces many to overcrowd or live in long distances from jobs in more affordable Counties. This in turn increases commuter traffic and congestion in our highways. For these reasons we believe that many of these issues need to be addressed in a comprehensive regional planning approach that addresses a better jobs-housing fit.

Although supportive of the report as a whole, we urge your particular consideration of the following recommendations:

1. Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) should update their data collection and modeling to quantify the greenhouse gas reduction impacts of housing affordability, gentrification, and jobs-housing fit. As defined in the report, "jobs-housing fit" is the extent to which the rents and

mortgages in a community are affordable to people who work there. In theory, a stronger jobs-housing fit should allow Californians to reduce their commute times and distances. However, this link needs to be tested and quantified, as do the links between home affordability generally and gentrification.

2. Performance measures for the sustainable communities strategy should include the jobs-housing fit and 5 other housing-related measures.
3. MPOs' progress in meeting goals should be measured through modeling and other sound scientific approaches.
4. The co-benefits of greenhouse gas reductions should be measured and reported.

We appreciate your consideration of our views.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cesar", followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Cesar Covarrubias  
Executive Director  
Kennedy Commission