

July 31, 2008

Ms. Mary Nichols
Chair, California Air Resources Board
P.O. Box 2815
Sacramento, 95812

RE: Giving Local Government a Larger Role in Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Dear Ms. Nichols:

I am writing to urge the Air Resources Board to elevate the priority of local government actions, including land use decisions, to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) as a key strategy for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The current draft AB32 Scoping Plan gives local government a very small role in California's future drive to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The draft says little about the relationship between changing land use patterns, reduced driving, and the AB32 mandated rollbacks in greenhouse gas emissions. Setting a higher target for local government actions reducing greenhouse emissions (including land use decisions) would provide a real incentive for local government officials to give more serious consideration to the climate change consequences of local government actions.

Rising gas prices already are causing many Californians to rethink their attitudes towards car use and the locations of their homes and jobs. Since transportation is California's single largest source of greenhouse emissions, and since a large part of the transportation-related carbon emissions is caused by long-distance commuting patterns based on local land use decisions, this is a major weakness of the Scoping Plan in its current draft form.

The Scoping Plan could be improved by:

Setting a higher target for reduced greenhouse gas emissions to be achieved by local government actions including land use decisions.

Giving local governments legal and financial tools and technical assistance to help them reduce VMT in their local land use and transportation policies which reduce unnecessary driving, car use, and gasoline consumption.

Supporting expansion of existing transit service, car-pooling, and other alternatives to single-passenger car use.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Art Madrid
Mayor

cc: California Air Resources Board Members
Climate Plan Members