



*everychild.one voice.*

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July 24, 2008

Dear California Air Resources Board:

The California State PTA is pleased to have the opportunity to submit comments on the California Air Resources Board's (ARB) draft scoping plan for AB 32, which should reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the State of California to 1990 levels by the year 2020.

As a partner in the Safe Routes to School Network, the California State PTA has actively joined efforts to increase numbers of children walking and biking to school, thus reducing miles driven by automobiles transporting them. Our delegates at State PTA Convention in May of 2008 passed a resolution committing our organization to working with schools, communities and governments to increase walking and biking to school, and to encourage neighborhood schools. We are also committed to becoming increasingly aware and actively involved in improving our environment.

Accordingly, State PTA requests that the ARB include in your revised scoping plan Safe Routes to School infrastructure and non –infrastructure programs in the section of the scoping plan titled “public education and programs to reduce vehicle miles traveled.” California has funded a state Safe Routes to School (SR2S) program at an average of \$24.25 million / year for the past seven years, but those allocations are now part of the volatile state budget process. The AB 32 Scoping Plan should call for the SR2S program to be funded on an ongoing basis in sufficient amounts to meet the needs of all California school communities for both infrastructure improvements that make walking and biking safer, and also education and encouragement programs that serve to increase participation.

State PTA also urges the ARB to work with the California Department of Education on the revision of school siting requirements (Title 5) which are being updated now to ensure that CDE is encouraging neighborhood schools, and to specifically mention the importance of school siting and neighborhood schools within the final Scoping Plan. Studies show that the closer to school a student lives, the more likely that student is to walk to school. School location is a major determinant of how communities are designed and function. Local traffic patterns with their corresponding vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions are affected by the proximity of schools to the students they serve.

Technology will provide major tools to reduce GHG emissions, but non-technical solutions such as those promoted by Safe Routes to School are important as well. They will provide critical assistance in achieving clean air goals, as well as giving important side benefits such as promoting active, healthy lifestyles, reducing childhood obesity and alarmingly-increased rates of diabetes. All of these are issues to which the California State PTA has a deep and long-standing commitment.

Thank you for this opportunity to voice our concerns on these critically important issues.

Sincerely,  
*Pam Brady*  
Pam Brady  
President