

2009 CHARTER

INTERAGENCY FORESTRY WORKING GROUP

ON CLIMATE CHANGE



THE CALIFORNIA STATE

BOARD OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION

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Necessity:

The Board of Forestry and Fire Protection (the Board) has very broad statutory responsibility including a role as a forest practice regulation entity, a role in setting the policy and the structure for fire protection in California, and also the responsibility to represent the State in Federal forestry issues.

Governor Schwarzenegger signed Executive Order S-13-08 that, in part, directs the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA), through the Climate Action Team, to initiate the state's first comprehensive climate adaptation strategy. The California Air Resources Board "Scoping Plan" also identifies the Board as the lead agency responsible for maintaining and exceeding forest sequestration levels in 2020. To help maintain and enhance California's forest health, linking our climate adaptation strategy with our greenhouse gas emission mitigation efforts will require a coordinated effort.

The CNRA, through the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection (Board), will lead the implementation process for forest related climate strategies in California.

The Board, with CNRA, has established an Interagency Forestry Working Group on Climate Change (IFWG) to:

- A. Utilize the Air Resources Board's AB 32 Scoping Plan forest related chapters (in particular, Section 16 and Appendix C), the Board's October 2008 "REPORT TO ARB ON MEETING AB 32 TARGETS", and the State's Climate Adaptation Strategy as the foundation for developing the Board's Climate Change mitigation and adaptation Work plan to achieve and surpass the 5 million metric ton CO₂ reduction goal outlined in the forestry sector by 2020 in ARB's Scoping Plan;
- B. Advise the Board on climate change-related research and policy needs, priorities and such other matters as the Board directs or as identified by consensus from the IFWG;
- C. Provide science-based recommendations and technical information to advise and assist the Board in making its determinations on climate policy and regulations;
- D. Assist the Board in identifying strategies to link climate change and energy policies with forestry mitigation and adaptation policies across state agencies, especially within programs led by entities on IFWG;
- E. Coordinate with the Board's Research and Science Committee on its mission to provide support to the Board to advance the science needed to support adaptive management, and to identify research needs.

Composition:

The IFWG will include representation from Cal/EPA, CALFIRE, ARB, DFG, DWR, CEC, and the U.S. Forest Service.

The Working Group will be appointed by and assist the CNRA and Board. The Working Group will be comprised of members with expertise in climate change and forestry policy, and other related

topics. It will be composed of approximately 9 members. The Working Group may call upon, with approval by the Board, other experts to provide subject matter expertise.

The Co-Chairs of the Working Group will be designated by CNRA and the Board. The Co-Chairs will be responsible for facilitation of activities and formal communications from the Group to the Board. The Co-Chairs will coordinate meetings, provide leadership, ensure progress of the Working Group toward timely completion of its tasks, and coordinate reports to the Board.

The Working Group (or the Chairs) may, as deemed appropriate and subject to financial constraints, obtain assistance from other qualified professionals for the purpose of providing unique expertise related to specific subject matter. The Group will utilize the services of a facilitator/coordinator from UC Cooperative extension to assist in coordinating and facilitating this effort. The individual will assist in providing structure and process to interactions so that the IFWG is able to function effectively and make timely and informed decisions.

There will be no financial compensation for services provided to the IFWG members from the Board.

Best available science is considered to be relevant science from all credible sources, including peer-reviewed government and university research, other published studies, and Working Group generated research products. Applicable historic information and unpublished data may have value and are to be considered if they can be assessed for accuracy and credibility.

The IFWG includes members of the various State agencies and departments and is the official forestry subgroup of the Climate Action Team. The Working Group reports to the Board its recommendations for action on an ongoing basis at the Board's meetings, and may submit interim reports of recommendations if needed.

Purpose:

The purpose of the Working Group is to provide recommendations and technical information to assist the Board in achieving the Board's goals and objectives as outlined in the Board's report to the Air Resources Board on AB32 and in relation to the ARB's Scoping Plan and climate adaptation strategies as referenced in EO-S-13-08. .

By this charter, the Board establishes the IFWG to promote accountability and clarify process. Members will use their independent judgment. Although the members will be appointed by the CNRA and the Board, this will not preclude others from participating in and contributing to the process.

Values:

Those that serve on the Working Group agree to the values listed below. The following values shall inform all of the Working Group's decisions.

- A. Objectively assist the CNRA and Board and serve the public's interest, with recognition of the need for an evaluation of relevant information that reflects environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable management to further the State's goals and policies.
- B. Support presentation of the full spectrum of findings, with every effort to provide consensus findings and recommendations.

- C. To ensure all IFWG meetings gather and utilize as much stakeholder input as possible through the use of a well-managed website on the Board's website, upkeep of an email listserv, making public meetings accessible by phone and/or webcast when available, providing advance distribution of key materials, and clear communication of opportunities for comment and associated deadlines.

Meeting Logistics:

The IFWG will meet periodically as needed to complete its tasks. Meetings will be convened for the entire IFWG. The meetings will be duly noticed and open to the public pursuant to the Bagley-Keene State Open Meeting Act. The public will be invited to comment by the Working Group Co-Chairs at specified times during meetings. The meetings will be conducted in person, with provision for telephonic attendance if possible. The Working group Co-Chairs may be responsible for determining meeting format, location, and duration. The Working Group Co-Chairs may assign individual tasks to subcommittees between meetings. In order to ensure progress and allow public access to the meetings, the Working Group Co-Chairs will establish a schedule of formal meetings. All actions and recommendations presented to the Board or otherwise made by the Working Group shall be subject to standard parliamentary procedures. Quorums are required for any actions. Meetings may be held in absence of a quorum where no action is taken.

Board of Forestry and Fire Protection Climate Change Work Plan:

A. Goals The plan has two goals: 1) to maintain and exceed an annual net carbon sink of 5 MMTCO₂ in the forest sector, and 2) to reduce the forest sectors vulnerability to climate change impacts. These goals shall be consistent with the following Executive Orders:

- # S-03-05, June 1, 2005, establishing greenhouse gas emission reduction targets
- # S-06-06, April 25, 2006, on biofuels and bioenergy from renewable resources
- # S-06-06, April 25, 2006, on biofuels and bioenergy from renewable resources
- # S-01-07, January 18, 2007, on Low Carbon Fuel Standard
- # S-13-08, November 14, 2008, Directing State Agencies to Plan for Sea Level Rise and Climate Impacts

B. Principles: The following principles for managing forest carbon and promoting resilience are intended to guide policy choices and to formulate effective strategies. These principles are designed to preserve and enhance carbon stocks in California forests and wood products while maintaining other co-benefits.

Protection and Conservation – The over-arching consideration for the forest sector is to protect and conserve forest land by keeping forests as working forests and reserves. The four major agents of change in California forests are wildfire, insects and disease, climate change, and human development/use. For wildfire, protection takes the form of active fire suppression, fuels management, hazard reduction, education, and management of catastrophic wildfire risk in conjunction with related programs by Cal FIRE, federal and local agencies to protect life, property, and natural resources. In the case of forest insects and disease, which often is greater than losses to wildfire, protection occurs in the removal of damaged timber, quarantines, and application of pest control measures. With regard to the impacts of development/use, protection takes many forms such as zoning to keep land in forest production, tax policies that favor timber growing, vegetation management to improve forest health, and limits on forest land conversion to non-forest uses. Conversions are especially important because they reduce or minimize the carbon storage potential of a parcel(s) of land, can lead to emissions, fracture biological habitats, interrupt natural

hydrologic regimes, and are associated with increases in air pollution through higher population densities. Approaches involving support for voluntary emission reduction projects are one such example.

Resilience – Climate change in the forest sector has the potential to alter disturbance regimes by affecting the timing, frequency, and magnitude of wildfires, pest infestations, and other agents of disturbance (Dale et al, 2001). The resiliency of a forest refers to its ability to recover from disturbance and is a measure of the overall health of a forest. Improving forest and range resiliency means that systems are better able to maintain storage of carbon and resist extreme climatic events. Obtaining better resiliency requires forest management that, among other things, promotes a diverse mix of tree species, a broad range of age classes, and maintains optimum densities for forest health and growth. Promoting resilience increases the ability of a system to withstand negative impacts without losing its basic functions. This is often linked to Adaptation efforts, which in the forest sector is defined as actions that are undertaken to increase the capacity of forests, ecosystems and society to function productively and cope with the adverse impacts from climate change (modified from Millar, 2007).

Restoration – Restoration means returning lands to a previous condition as healthy productive forests. This includes reforestation of lands burned by wildfire, addressing invasive species and other vegetation management actions that restore degraded forest lands. For example, the United States Forest Service estimates a minimum backlog of 80,000 acres of areas burned that have not benefited from reforestation efforts. This number has increased substantially with the recent fires in Northern California and may be several times larger than this. Re-planting these lands will increase carbon sequestration in forests. In addition, as trees grow and mature they provide habitat for wildlife and other co-benefits. Additional funding and technical assistance to support reforestation/afforestation programs on appropriate lands is one such approach.

Utilization – Use of forests and forest products can be made more carbon neutral. Harvesting results in an initial decrease in the amount of standing carbon in a forest stand. However, the fate of harvested or removed carbon depends on the type of forest products that are produced. Promoting the use of long lived wood products can support carbon sequestration goals, provided that it is produced sustainably. In addition, as building materials and an energy source, wood can substitute for more energy-intensive materials and fossil fuels. Re-assessing the current forest regulatory framework to provide incentives to preserve the working forest landscape is a possible approach.

Mitigation – Mitigation involves taking actions that will reduce emissions that cause climate change or offset the negative effects of climate change. In the forest sector this involves management actions that increase carbon sequestration and actions that can lead to mitigating emissions. Mitigation can include a range of management actions that offset climate change impacts (i.e. reforestation, wood utilization, increased carbon sequestration).

Adaptation -- Forests will play an important role in flora and fauna species adaptation in the face of climate change. Management of California's forests should protect native biodiversity, promote the co-benefits of ecosystems services of these lands including carbon sequestration, and increase the resilience of these lands to changing climate conditions.

C. Actions: The IFWG will meet and form sub-groups to meet the two goals set out above and will establish a clear workplan to provide more direction. The IFWG will assign responsibility to sub groups to develop a plan for each subject area. These sub groups will include experts from federal and state agencies, academia, and those with expertise from the stakeholder community. The sub group(s) will report progress to the Board, share results and solicit input from the public through

workshops, and develop an approach and action plan by the specified date. A priority is to identify and develop a process for more refined GHG emissions inventory, and methods for assessing progress toward the no net loss policy. This will lead to the development of a statewide forest carbon monitoring and assessment plan that is spatial and more regional in scope, and utilizing improved data, and allow for reevaluation of the forest sector target as outlined in the ARB Scoping Plan.

The IFWG will use the workplan presented to ARB on October 2008 "REPORT TO ARB ON MEETING AB 32 TARGETS" and the December 2008 draft adaptation plan titled "An Adaptation Plan for California's Forest Sector and Rangelands Revised", as well as the AB 32 Scoping Plan of the ARB to develop the final workplan.

In development of the workplan, it is assumed IFWG members will address topics such as:

- How can we improve the state's ability to monitor natural and manmade fires and how can we best mitigate these emissions, or enhance carbon stocks, through a climate change lens?
- Consumption of wood products that originate from outside the state lead to "leakage" issues. How can we sustain an economically viable industry inside the state that addresses climate issues, and not simply export them to other locales?
- How can woody biomass be sustainably harvested to meet the goals and funding requirements under programs such as AB 118?
- How can GHG mitigation efforts under ARB's Scoping plan best link with climate resiliency efforts?
- How can programs proposed be sustainably funded?
- How can forestry carbon offsets help meet the goals mentioned?
- How can international forest offsets be incorporated into AB 32 implementation?
- Are there science-based working definitions (criteria, guidelines, protocols, etc) for "sustainable" thinning practices that the Commission could adopt for the AB 118 sustainability evaluation criteria? If not, could such a definition be developed for use in California forests through funding of research or model demonstration projects? In addressing this question, the IFWG may need to examine how thinning operations are defined in regulations and agency-level technical guidance and what, if any, new statutory, regulatory, or technical guidance would solve the problem; the economics of thinning operations and if additional funding is needed to conduct them in a "sustainable" manner; the need for more enforcement and oversight of thinning operations?
- How likely is it that a strong market demand for forest biomass could drive unsustainable harvest or production practices such as has occurred internationally with other alternative bio-fuel feedstocks (e.g. palm oil, sugarcane and corn)?
- On a lifecycle basis, what greenhouse gas emissions "credit" if any, should be given to fuel derived from forest waste because of reduced risk of severe forest fire?