

May 27, 2019

Senate Environmental Quality Committee
State Capitol, Room 2205
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: **CFCC Support Letter for AB 293 (Garcia)-‘Greenhouse gases: offset protocols’ amendments**

Dear Chair Allen and Senate Environmental Quality Committee Members,

Thank you for your committee’s continued leadership overseeing California’s landmark Cap & Trade Program. The California Forest Carbon Coalition (CFCC) is writing to express support for Assembly Bill 293 (AB 293) by Assemblymember Eduardo Garcia regarding greenhouse gas offset protocols.

The CFCC is comprised of a diverse array of California forest stakeholders - including conservation groups, Native American Tribes and industrial timberland managers - representing a large portion of California’s forestland that have come together with a unified voice to support California’s offset program. California’s offset program is the only one of its kind that is encouraging investment in rural and working landscapes at scale. We think AB 293 embraces this success in working to identify more California specific offset opportunities on working natural landscapes.

Climate science demands substantial carbon sequestration from forests and other natural and working ecosystems. Keeping temperature increases below the 1.5°C goal called for by the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) will require forest restoration and improved forest management on natural and working landscapes at an unprecedented scale. We also know that forests help purify and secure our water supply, provide critical habitat for fish and wildlife, provide recreational opportunities and sustain well-paid jobs.

California’s forest carbon offset program is the only program in the world that enlists forest landowners to grow carbon at scale under strict regulatory guidance. This rigor would provide invaluable for developing new offset protocol categories. The California Air Resources Board (CARB) US Forest Projects Protocol is the most rigorous regulatory standard for forest carbon sequestration in the world. The CARB Protocol has achieved real and verifiable carbon sequestration along with considerable enhancements to the conservation and sustainable management of California’s iconic forests.

The offset projects our groups have developed, among other things, have allowed tribes to reacquire ancestral territory, conserved forested watersheds that provide drinking water and critical salmon habitat, increased fire resiliency in rural communities, and created jobs in economically disadvantaged areas.

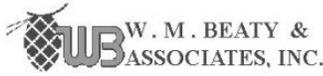
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In light of the successes achieved through the forest offset protocol, the CFCC encourages the committee to adopt additional offset protocols to further incentivize land-based climate mitigation across California's varied ecosystems, in support of California's commitment to sequester carbon in its natural and working lands. Adding additional offset protocols in the natural and working land sector would not only increase the cost-containment potential of the program, but also provide considerable environmental benefits within California. It is also an opportunity to bring new and diverse constituents into a growing carbon economy.

We look forward to working with the committee to expand and improve the offset program going forward. In particular, we applaud the creation of the Compliance Offset Protocol Task Force in 2018 to increase offset projects in the State. We appreciate that forestry and agricultural experts, scientists, as well as carbon market experts, are all included as stakeholders on the Compliance Offsets Protocol Task Force. We also applaud the State's intention of lowering project transaction costs without sacrificing project integrity, in order to enable a greater number of landowners to participate in this unique program.

We look forward to working with the committee to build on this groundbreaking program and are happy to provide more information on any aspect of the forest offset program. Again, thank you again for the opportunity to share our position on this vitally important issue. Please contact me at (916) 718-8292 or by email at tbrunello@calstrat.com.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tony Brunello".

Tony Brunello
Director
California Forest Carbon Coalition