

March 27, 2024

The Honorable Michael S. Regan
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20460

RE: Support for the California Department of Conservation application under the Climate Pollution Reduction Grants Program

Dear Administrator Regan:

The California Air Resources Board (CARB) expresses strong support for the California Department of Conservation (DOC) implementation grant application under the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Climate Pollution Reduction Grants (CPRG) Program.

Staff and leadership from CARB have worked with DOC since 2022 on the Forest Biomass to Carbon-Negative Biofuels Pilot Program, which will be leveraged under this application. In light of the momentum around California's circular bioeconomy, the successes achieved to date by DOC, and existing synergies in collaboration and programmatic execution, CARB is pleased to support this application, and to see it expand the DOC's Biomass to Carbon Negative Biofuels Program to a statewide geography, to include more feedstocks, and to squarely address persistent stumbling blocks to biomass utilization projects.

This application is aligned with California's broad climate leadership. The State has been a leader in cleaning the air and the fight against climate change for decades. Most recently, California passed Assembly Bill 1279 (AB 1279) (Muratsuchi, Chapter 337, Statutes of 2022).¹ This bill establishes the State's science-based policy to reduce anthropogenic greenhouse gas emission (GHGs) and achieve carbon neutrality by 2045. This transition will require a historic rate of clean technology production, deployment, rapid consumer adoption, and coordination across all levels of government, while ensuring affordability and maximizing myriad co-benefits. CARB's 2022 Scoping Plan Update² lays out the sector-by-sector, technologically feasible, and cost-effective path for California to achieve the mandates in AB 1279 and highlights how increased climate ambition can address persistent air pollution and opportunity gaps faced by low-income communities and communities of color.

Carbon-negative biofuels can play an important role in achieving many of California's goals and priorities outlined above, including offsetting fossil fuel use, storing carbon, supporting

¹ Available online at: https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=202120220AB1279

² Available online at: <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/resources/documents/2022-scoping-plan-documents>

community scale economic development, reducing wildfire risk, and prioritizing strategies that stand to improve air quality for Californians most burdened by air pollution.

Through CARB's leadership of the State's CPRG planning grant process to develop its Priority Climate Action Plan (PCAP) and through other engagements, communities across the State have demonstrated high interest in biofuels from woody biomass waste. At the same time, the State's existing programs have not been able to meet demand. Biofuels development has been cited in numerous state policy priority documents, including as a central action in the 2022 Scoping Plan Update, and was included directly in California's CPRG PCAP.³

CARB anticipates supporting the DOC through ongoing program design and implementation consultation, as well as identifying opportunities for program synergies in the programs and projects that CARB administers, among other activities as appropriate. CARB has seen success over the last 18 months in our interagency collaboration with DOC and would be glad to be a part of this significant step forward for the State and all Californians.

If you have any questions or need further information, please contact International Advisor Sarah Jo Szambelan, at SarahJo.Szambelan@arb.ca.gov.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Steven S. Cliff, Ph.D., Executive Officer

cc: without enclosures

Edie Chang, Deputy Executive Officer, Planning, Freight and Toxics

Rajinder Sahota, Deputy Executive Officer, Climate Change and Research

Matt Botill, Chief, Industrial Strategies Division

³ Available online at: https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2024-03/California%20CPRG%20Priority%20Climate%20Action%20Plan%202024%20March%201_0.pdf