



**CALIFORNIA
ENERGY COMMISSION**



March 28, 2024

Elizabeth Betancourt
California Department of Conservation
715 P Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Letter of Support for California Department of Conservation's Application to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Climate Pollution Reduction Grants (CPRG) Program

Dear Elizabeth Betancourt:

The California Energy Commission (CEC) is pleased to offer this letter of support for California Department of Conservation's (DOC) Application to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Climate Pollution Reduction Grants (CPRG) Program, titled "Biomass to Carbon Negative Biofuels Program." The CEC has worked with the DOC on its program for supporting conversion of forest biomass to biofuels within California's Sierra Nevada region and have been active partners in developing the state's draft Wood Utilization Strategy led by DOC staff. CEC is looking forward to continuing and expanding on this collaboration through this application for funding to operationalize the DOC's Biomass to Carbon Negative Biofuels Program statewide.

California is committed to 100 percent of electricity retail sales coming from renewable and zero-carbon resources by 2045 and ensuring that all Californians benefit from a more reliable, cleaner, and affordable electricity grid. Mitigating catastrophic wildfires and associated climate change and criteria air pollution impacts is an integral part of strategies to support the state's transition to a clean energy economy. To achieve California's clean energy goals, it is essential to explore different approaches and strategies for using woody biomass resources, including the anticipated high volume of wood wastes produced from a million acres of forest treatment. These strategies include converting wood wastes to fuel, electricity, or both, thereby offsetting fossil fuel needs, providing energy and wildfires resiliency to communities, and building rural economies, among other benefits.

CEC supports the goal of this proposal to expand DOC's Biomass to Carbon Negative Biofuels Program to be statewide in scope. The CEC understands that under the proposed project, the DOC team will work with a broad range of stakeholders including manufacturers and project implementers, state and federal agencies, and community-based organizations, to develop, demonstrate and deploy technologies

and facilities for woody biomass conversion to biofuels at commercial scale. This proposed program complements and aligns with several of CEC's programs and projects on bioenergy and biofuels, such as those funded through the Electric Program Investment Charge, the Gas Research and Development Program, and the Clean Transportation Program. The CEC also recently launched the Clean Hydrogen Program, with upcoming funding opportunities that could potentially fund projects that use biomass as a feedstock for hydrogen production.

If the proposal is funded, the CEC looks forward to supporting the DOC project team through ongoing program design and implementation consultation, as well as identifying opportunities for synergies in programs and projects that we administer. Further, the CEC is ready to fill a similar role as it has over the last two years, including staff contributions to program development, grant application review and scoring, collaborative workshop development and offerings, shared public outreach activities, project implementation review and technical advisories, and others. The CEC has decades of experience in bioenergy R&D, a set of experts in this field, and an established network of key stakeholders (such as through CEC's Empower Innovation web portal) that could be leveraged for the success of DOC's proposed project.

The proposed project goals are consistent with California's clean energy goals. We appreciate the opportunity to support DOC's proposal for the Biomass to Carbon Negative Biofuels Program.

If you have any questions, please contact Rizaldo Aldas at rizaldo.aldas@energy.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Hochschild", with a stylized flourish at the end.

David Hochschild
Chair
California Energy Commission