

December 1, 2008

Mary Nichols
Chair, California Air Resources Board
1001 I Street
P.O. Box 2815
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: City of Albany Comments on Air Resources Board Proposed Scoping Plan

Dear Chair Nichols and Members of the Board:

On behalf of the City of Albany, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the California Air Resources Board's (ARB) Proposed Scoping Plan (Scoping Plan).

To date the City has conducted a greenhouse gas emissions baseline inventory, and has identified a goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) 25% below 2004 levels by the year 2020. The City is currently conducting a public planning process that will result in a climate action plan to identify specific measures to achieve our goals in reducing GHG over the next several years. The Climate Action Plan will be adopted as part of the City's General Plan to add further structure for land use planning.

Overall, the City finds the draft Scoping Plan to be a good approach to identifying how to manage climate change statewide. In particular, the City appreciates the consideration of environmental quality in connection with a broad range of factors such as economy, health, and quality of life.

While the City of Albany is generally supportive of a number of programs and policies outlined in the Scoping Plan, there are a number of issues the City would like to see considered further. In particular, the City recommends additional analysis of opportunities to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT), waste diversion, and funding opportunities for local governments.

The Scoping Plan should identify goals to reduce VMT within regional areas, with due consideration given to the varying composition of regions. Consideration of ways to enhance local and regional transportation, including infrastructure, and linking VMT reduction goals in conjunction with land use policy should be included.

In addition, the City requests the Scoping Plan appropriately allow the SB 375 process to develop regional transportation-related GHG targets. Implementation of the regional planning processes in SB 375 are new and largely untested. The 5 MMT figure, while a place holder, nevertheless sets an appropriate benchmark that helps assure that the state can achieve its overall 2020 goal.

Waste diversion programs have been in place throughout the state for a number of years, and have been increasingly successful in diverting a significant amount of materials from

the landfill, clearly resulting in a reduction of GHG emissions. The City requests further consideration of waste diversion within the Scoping Plan to identify the potential emissions reductions that can be achieved. The City finds this particularly critical as it provides the ability to achieve several goals, including GHG emissions consecutively under an existing program.

As both the state and local governments are faced with critical budget shortages, additional costs to heavily invest in GHG emission technologies in the next 2 to 3 years will become more burdensome for local governments. AB 32 requires that reductions in GHG emissions must achieve the maximum technologically feasible and cost effective reductions and for the ARB to “consider the cost-effectiveness of these regulations.” (HSC §38560) The state should ensure that local and regional governments have the necessary means to achieve goals identified within AB 32. The City of Albany strongly encourages the ARB to consider these limitations as it moves forward with the Scoping Plan.

The City recommends revenue generated from implementation of the scoping plan be utilized to assist local governments. The state should also help create incentive based funding mechanisms and assist local jurisdictions identify creative funding initiatives. In addition, financial incentives need to be identified to encourage markets. While local governments can influence development design to a certain extent, the reality is that developers will only build projects that will be purchased by willing customers and that are profitable. In order to effect the desired change, incentives must be provided to the development community and local agencies in order to encourage more development in areas where the reductions in GHG emissions will be the greatest.

Development of the Scoping Plan provides a unique opportunity for interaction between the state and the local level to develop a comprehensive strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and demonstrate California’s leadership in this sector. Determining the success of the Scoping Plan and the work of local jurisdictions is contingent upon a reputable, scientifically accepted model to calculate greenhouse gas reductions. The City recommends that the state identify and recommend useable calculators, and also conduct analysis of a model greenhouse gas reduction measures to identify probable reduction benefits and implementation steps in an effort to streamline the complexity of this emerging sector.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on the draft Scoping Plan. The City of Albany looks forward to working with the ARB in the future.

Sincerely,

Robert S. Lieber
Mayor

Cc: League of California Cities, 1400 K Street, Sacramento, CA 95864