

**CITY OF ALBANY
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA
STAFF REPORT**

Agenda Date: December 1, 2008

Reviewed by: BP

SUBJECT: Comment Letter to the California Air Resources Board regarding the Proposed AB 32 Carbon Emissions Reduction Scoping Plan

REPORT BY: Nicole Almaguer, Environmental Specialist

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That the City Council authorize submittal of a comment letter to the Air Resources Board regarding the proposed scoping plan for implementation of AB 32.

BACKGROUND

In 2006, California enacted AB 32 (Nuñez, Chapter 488, Statutes of 2006). AB 32 requires California to reduce its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to 1990 levels by 2020.

The California Air Resources Board (ARB) is the lead state agency for implementation of AB 32. ARB has developed a Proposed Scoping Plan (Plan), which under AB 32 must be approved by ARB by Jan. 1, 2009. The Plan proposes a set of actions designed to reduce overall greenhouse gas emissions, and identifies how the state will achieve the necessary reductions in greenhouse gas emissions by 2020. The Plan includes actions in areas such as energy efficiency, transportation, green building, recycling and waste, housing, high speed rail, industrial emissions, water, agriculture and land use planning.

Under the Plan, actions may be implemented through direct regulations, alternative compliance mechanisms, monetary and non-monetary incentives, voluntary actions, and market-based mechanisms such as a proposed cap-and-trade system. The Plan was released on Oct. 15, 2008 and will be considered for approval at the ARB Board hearing on Dec. 11, 2008.

DISCUSSION

To date the City has taken a strong lead regarding climate action planning, including development of a baseline greenhouse gas emissions inventory, and adoption of a greenhouse gas emissions goal to reduce emissions 25% below 2004 levels by the year 2020. In addition, the City is currently in process of developing a climate action plan, with technical assistance from EDAW, Inc. The Climate Action Plan will be developed over the next several months, with a community workshop in May 2009 at City's Green Albany

Day event. A climate action survey is currently available on the City’s website, encouraging the community to “Take Action – Take the Climate Action Survey”.

Given the strides the City has taken regarding climate change, it is encouraging to see ARB moving forward with the Plan at the state level. Staff has reviewed the Plan, and discussed it at a number of regional climate action venues and workshops. The Plan outlines a number of programs and policies, and is a good start to developing a statewide climate protection plan. Nevertheless, certain issues should be considered further including additional analysis of opportunities to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT), waste diversion, and funding opportunities for local governments. The attached draft comment letter provides additional discussion, requesting the ARB take this unique planning opportunity to develop a more comprehensive action plan.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT

Submittal of the attached comment letter supports the actions taken to date by the City regarding climate change. The comment letter encourages the ARB to further develop the Plan and ensure appropriate guidance is provided to local jurisdictions.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Implementation of climate action measures will require financial resources that the majority of jurisdictions currently do not have allocated. The comment letter requests ARB conduct further analysis and provide funding opportunities for local governments.

Attachments:

1. Draft Comment Letter to California Air Resources Board regarding the Proposed Scoping Plan