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ARB adopts new protocols for climate change program

Board provides guidance on local government, urban forestry, manure management projects

DIAMOND BAR, Calif. - The Air Resources Board today adopted three separate greenhouse gas emission accounting protocols to quantify emissions from local government operations, and urban forest and manure digester projects.

"Today's board adoption marks yet another important step forward in California's goal to cut greenhouse gas emissions 30 percent by 2020," said ARB acting chairman Barbara Riordan. "These protocols will give municipalities, as well as farmers and others, the guidance they need in moving ahead in their voluntary efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions."

The local government operations protocol provides a consistent methodology to develop greenhouse gas emission inventories for California's local governments, including cities and towns. The protocol lays out specific guidelines in how local governments can assess emissions from buildings and facilities; streetlights and traffic signals; water delivery and wastewater treatment facilities; ports and airports; vehicle and transit fleets; power generation facilities; solid waste facilities; and other process and fugitive emissions. ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability and several other stakeholders assisted in developing the protocol.

The urban forest protocol provide cities, counties, agencies, utilities and educational campuses specific guidance on how their tree planting and maintenance efforts, if properly conducted, can maximize carbon storage. The protocol offers guidance on evaluating location, numbers and types of trees planted, and how to account for tree maintenance-related emissions generated by trucks, chainsaws and clippers. Cal Fire, the USDA-Forest Service, and experts from academia, government, utilities and non-governmental organizations also helped in crafting the protocol.

The manure digester project protocol provides standardized accounting methodology for projects that reduce greenhouse gases such as methane and carbon dioxide through optimal waste management practices, from storage, disposal and transport. By using data on a

facility's animals, manure handling processes, environmental conditions, carbon dioxide combustion, and digester-related equipment and biogas, the protocol calculates the amount of methane that would have been otherwise released if the digester had not been capturing and destroying the gas.

ARB worked with the California Climate Action Registry and a number of other stakeholder groups in developing the protocols to quantify greenhouse gas emissions and emissions reduction projects throughout the state for use in voluntary actions, while specifics of the Global Warming Solutions Act (AB32) are still being developed. ARB staff is working to determine how emission reductions from early voluntary actions, including any from using the protocols adopted today, could eventually be used officially for compliance purposes as part of the state's implementation of AB32.

Governor Schwarzenegger signed the Global Warming Solutions Act two years ago this week. Since then, ARB staff have laid out the strategy to meet the program's goals in the form of the draft scoping plan, and have developed numerous specific regulations targeted at reducing greenhouse gas emissions from a variety of sources throughout the state.

For copies of the protocols adopted today, go to www.arb.ca.gov .

The Air Resources Board is a department of the California Environmental Protection Agency. ARB's mission is to promote and protect public health, welfare, and ecological resources through effective reduction of air pollutants while recognizing and considering effects on the economy. The ARB oversees all air pollution control efforts in California to attain and maintain health based air quality standards.

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