



Western Riverside Council of Governments

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May 21, 2008

Mr. Panama Bartholomy
California Energy Commission
1516 9th Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: Comments on the Draft Land Use Subgroup – Climate Action Team Submission to California Air Resources Board Scoping Plan on Local Governments, Land Use and Transportation

Dear Mr. Bartholomy:

The Western Riverside Council of Governments (WRCOG) would like to commend the Land Use Subgroup on their efforts in developing this draft document. WRCOG held a workshop of the subregion's Planning Directors to review the subject document and provide comments, questions, and recommendations to the Land Use Subgroup. The attached comments are representative of issues discussed by those who attended the Planning Directors meeting; they have not been reviewed or endorsed by WRCOG's Executive Committee.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Barbara Spoonhour at (951) 955-8313 or by e-mail at spoonhour@wrcog.cog.ca.us.

Sincerely,

Rick Bishop
Executive Director

Draft Land Use Subgroup – Climate Action Team Submission to California Air Resources Board Scoping Plan on Local Governments, Land Use and Transportation Comments

Section 1.1.2. GHG Land Use Policy Principals

2. *“Going forward the State will adopt policies to address land use decisions directed at reducing GHG emission in a collaborative effort with local and regional governments.”*

Comment: Please provide clarification as to the term “collaborative effort.”

Section 2.2.1. California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

Comment: Clarification is needed on what is in mind or what the focus for CEQA is from the LUSCAT. A suggestion to increase the efficiency of the CEQA process would be to educate the judicial system on local governments land use decisions and practices.

Section 2.3.3. Improving Transportation Planning, Blueprint Program Improvements

Comment: The Blueprint process needs to be changed by hiring local consultants that understand the local government’s issues and when conducting meetings on the process, there needs to be more frequent meetings to ensure all the local needs are being met.

“Any additional Blueprint funding resources should be tied to demonstration of progress in implementation across all blueprint goals, including housing, transportation, and resource protection.”

Comment: The State needs to shepherd this process from the concept of the blueprint process to the implementation stages if the State is looking at connecting funding resources to the process.

Section 2.4.3. Improving Housing Availability, Housing Financing Program Criteria

“State agencies with housing funding programs should examine their criteria and, when appropriate and within their statutory authority, incorporate climate change consideration.”

Comment: If the State intends on local governments to include this in their housing programs, it would be helpful for the State to provide assistance. This could be through template documents.

Section 2.4.3. Improving Housing Availability, The entitlement process for housing, especially infill, is uncertain, lengthy, and costly

“Existing infill exemption provisions for infill do not work.”

Comment: Clarification on what type of data is available to make this statement is needed. Throughout the document, there tends to be statements without supporting documentation. Will there be an appendix provided that will address this type of information?

Section 2.5.3. Improving Natural Resources and Agricultural Land Protection, Valuing Ecosystem Services

“Terrestrial sequestration is a service that could have significant benefit for meeting the State’s climate goals if its value could be quantified.”

Comment: Please provide clarify what is meant by “terrestrial sequestration”. Additional background information on this would be helpful.

Section 2.5.3. Improving Natural Resources and Agricultural Land Protection, Mitigation

“Currently the use of mitigation as an option to comply with natural resources protection programs does not involve the valuing of the sequestration potential of either project or mitigation land.”

Comment: Please provide clarification as to what is meant by “sequestration potential”.

Section 2.9.2. State Capital Outlay Activities Underway, Location of State-Owned and Leased Offices

“Additionally, energy efficiency, green and sustainable building practices and design excellence in public buildings will ensure the quality and integrity of a State building’s design, operation, and place in the community.”

Comment: The State may want to consider building a LEED basic program. While it is understood there would be a need to quantify, it would be a good inclusion to this section.

Section 2.10. School Construction

Comment: The State needs to recognize that local governments have no authority on how a school district sites its schools, and when developing strategies for school siting, the State needs to be very clear and not hold local governments accountable for school activities.

Section 3.1. Defining the Target.

“Targets in all sectors should be analyzed for cost per ton of reduction. ARB should base its targets and recommendations on where the greatest reductions can be achieved for the lowest cost.”

Comment: This statement leads the reader to believe the State is only interested in the “low hanging fruit” concept. All sectors should be considered equal and not equitable when defining targets to ensure the State is going to meet its goal.

Section 4.3. Specific Reduction Strategies, Pay As You Drive Insurance Premiums

Comment: This is a regressive tax on those who may not be able to afford it. The intent is to mobilize people close to work centers; however, there are areas within the State where residents can not afford to move closer to work centers or the work centers they live near do not support the salary needed for the area.

Section 4.4.1. Land Use, Development Guidelines

“The Integrated Waste Management Board (IWMB) will develop watershed-friendly, sustainable landscape guidelines that reduce GHGs for adoption and customization for local climates and conditions.”

Comment: The IWMB does not seem to be the responsible agency for this strategy and seems to be outside of the activities they are charged with. The Department of

Water Resources should be the agency to cover this task. Additional information as to the agency determination is needed in this section.

"By developing protocols and working lands model that can be adapted to the needs and circumstances of a particular local government, the consequences of GHG emissions and other ecosystem services can be factored into the local land use decision-making process."

Comment: Please provide clarification to the term "ecosystem services." It is unclear what the State is trying to convey in this statement.

Section 4.4.1. Land Use, CEQA Improvements

"Identify improvements to CEQA to reduce barriers to approving more compact developments, infill and affordable housing during the process for updating the CEQA Guidelines pursuant to AB 97."

Comment: The correct legislation is SB 97.

Section 4.4.1. Land Use, Strategic Growth Council

"Award and manage grants and loans from Proposition 84 to support the development of sustainable communities."

Comment: Please provide clarification if this statement would dilute the intent of the proposition.

Section 6.8. Waste

"Increase mandatory recycling goals by jurisdictions from 50% to 75% by 2015."

Comment: There are many jurisdictions in the State that have not reached the 50% diversion goal and may never reach this goal because of population, tourism, schools, business and industry practices, and a variety of other reasons that are not within the control of the local government. The requirements for local governments to increase diversion are much tougher than on State facilities and school districts and the State should focus on these. If the State intends to increase the diversion rate, then it would be most effectively be pursued at the State level and not the local government level.