

Press Teleconference Comments by Tom Frantz – June 10, 2009

The scoping plan not only fails in its key goal of effectively reducing GHG emissions, it also fails to use the opportunity, clearly stated in AB 32 that, wherever possible, co-pollutants already causing air quality problems must be reduced along with GHG emissions. CARB has totally ignored the opportunity to directly regulate key sectors of the GHG inventory. Among these sectors are industrial agriculture, namely huge factory dairies and processing plants, in the San Joaquin Valley which are responsible for at least 5% of the state's CO2 emission inventory and also produce a very significant proportion of the local and very serious air pollution problem experienced by residents in the San Joaquin Valley. Requiring industrial agriculture to conserve resources and become less dependent on fossil fuel would also reduce air pollution. The voluntary methods CARB has proposed for agriculture will not come close to getting this sector to do its part to reduce its unsustainable reliance on fossil fuel.

The scoping plan, as adopted, will actually increase the air pollution burden on the San Joaquin Valley. It does this by directly encouraging biofuel refineries and biomass incinerators for location in this most poverty impacted and air polluted part of the state. There has been no examination of the local environmental and health impacts of these proposed facilities. This is contrary to AB 32 which explicitly warns against any measures which will increase local air pollution problems. For example, several biomass incinerators are now, either operating already or being built in the San Joaquin Valley and the fuel source is "prunings and clippings", so-called waste products of our modern industrial style agriculture. These facilities will directly pollute our air worse than a coal plant, require increased truck traffic, use up precious water resources, and foolishly burn plant material which would more sustainably be returned to the soil. At the same time they are being touted as renewable facilities and are satisfying the renewal portfolio requirements for major power companies elsewhere in the state.

In conclusion, we should not pretend, as CARB is doing, that we can any longer avoid the need for the agricultural sector and everyone else to start immediately paying the true cost of our fossil fuel based economy.

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