

DOCKETED

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California Farm Bureau Comment to Docket 22-ERDD-02 Climate Innovation Program

Please find public comments from the California Farm Bureau, attached.

Additional submitted attachment is included below.



January 2, 2024

California Energy Commission
715 P Street
Sacramento, California 95814

Climate Innovation Program – Docket 22-ERDD-02

Submitted via email

Dear Chair Hochschild and Commissioners:

California Farm Bureau (Farm Bureau) writes to submit the following comment letter regarding the California Energy Commission's (CEC) Climate Innovation Program (CIP) workshop focused on agriculture and forestry (Docket 22-ERDD-02). Farm Bureau is a non-governmental, non-profit organization representing over 28,000 farming members, including over 20,000 small farms, with a purpose to protect and promote agricultural interests throughout California and to find solutions to the problems facing agricultural businesses and rural communities.

Farm Bureau is encouraged that the CEC conducted this CIP workshop to hear directly from agricultural stakeholders. We welcome the opportunity to meet directly with CEC staff and would gladly include in that discussion our Director of the California Bountiful Foundation, Farm Bureau's science and research-based division, to help CEC staff better understand how agriculture adopts climate smart practices and technologies.

The CIP workshop presented valuable information from a range of academic and scientific expertise, but unfortunately did not have a depth of representation from the average California farmer, rancher, or farm worker. Additionally, many presentations highlighted challenges that climate smart forestry and agriculture practices and technologies have been adopted in California due to a lack of coordination across state departments and agencies. For example, the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) effectively eliminated Net Energy Metering Aggregation (NEMA) while the state and its agencies promote on farm solar and electrification. The legislature and CPUC have failed to promote and support the use of biomass for energy production, but then in presentations like the CIP workshop, bioenergy is viewed as a smart climate policy. Farm Bureau agrees with the CEC that on farms and ranches, encouraging biomass and greater electric infrastructure must go hand in hand. Unfortunately, this goal is not shared across other state entities.

Further, better coordination between the CEC and the California Air Resources Board (CARB) could help to ensure that forest and agricultural waste product streams, including for the



creation of energy and biochar are supported across state agencies in order to decrease smoke and greenhouse gas emissions from massive wildfires and from traditional agricultural practices like crop controls. Today, CEC and CARB are not aligned on issues that could help improve how forest and agricultural waste products are best utilized to create affordable energy, green jobs, and a true circular economy. This alignment is vital as the state works towards reaching Governor Newsom's goal of treating 1,000,000 acres of forest and wooded lands for wildfire mitigation, annually.

Farm Bureau recommends that CEC staff meet with Farm Bureau and other agricultural and forestry stakeholders directly to uncover more instances where the CEC's interest in encouraging the use of innovative practices and technologies is being frustrated by overlapping programs at other departments and agencies that would prevent CEC staff from pursuing many of the industry's preferred methods of participating in climate reduction strategies. We look forward to that discussion.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Peter Ansel'.

Peter Ansel
Sr. Policy Advocate