

July 11, 2017

RE: The Nature Conservancy SUPPORT for Reauthorization of Cap and Trade Program as Critical Path for Progress on Climate Change

“The Nature Conservancy has consistently supported actions to establish California’s 2020 and 2030 greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction goals. Today, we announce our support for Assembly Bills 398 and 617 as the only viable path to continue California’s global leadership in addressing climate change. Passage of this legislative package is critically important to continue the State’s successful actions both to combat climate change and to catalyze the transition to a low carbon economy.

The legislative package announced last night by Governor Brown and legislative leaders requires a two-thirds vote to clarify legal authority and create market conditions necessary for the success of California’s cap and trade program. All stakeholders, including The Nature Conservancy, might prefer some elements in the bills were different. But this legislation will reduce carbon pollution and address local air quality concerns in a meaningful way. For these reasons, we support AB 398 and AB 617 and recognize the extraordinary efforts to pull diverse interests together to make these bills work to achieve multiple goals.

The extension of California’s cap and trade program has generated an awareness that in some parts of the state, localized air pollution poses health risks to vulnerable communities. We support AB 617 and other efforts to address the inequitable burden some communities face by reducing emissions of criteria air pollution and air toxics concurrent with the extension of the Cap and Trade program.

Additionally, the continuation of “offset activities” in the cap and trade program is important to broaden the scope of actions that reduce carbon emissions from forest conservation and restoration, to urban forestry, wetlands restoration and agricultural practices. Carbon offsets support conservation efforts, reduce overall costs of emissions reductions for consumers and extend climate solutions in California beyond its borders.

At this moment, the continuity of California’s Cap-and-Trade program is essential for California’s economic and environmental future. This legislation is critically important to combat climate change and build confidence in the US and international community that climate action is a catalyst in the transition to a low carbon future. We urge the legislature to approve AB 398 and AB 617 immediately.”

Jay Ziegler
California Director of External Affairs and Policy
The Nature Conservancy