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## Urban Forestry Protocol Background Document

Over the next two years, the Urban Forestry Protocol drafting team will develop protocol recommendations to account for the climate benefits of urban forestry activities. The California Climate Action Registry (the Registry), a voluntary greenhouse gas registry, will consider these protocol recommendations for adoption and use by its members. The protocol recommendations will provide accounting guidance for particular urban forestry activities, so that the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and emission reductions that result from these activities can be quantified, reported and verified with the Registry.

Urban forests can provide multiple climate benefits. Through proper planting and placement, urban forests and trees can reduce residential and commercial energy use associated with air-conditioning and space heating. Urban forests also remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere through carbon sequestration. Additionally, the biomass waste from urban trees can be utilized as a source of energy with potentially lower GHG emissions than other traditional energy sources. The drafting team anticipates that the protocol recommendations will provide accounting guidance for these three urban forestry activities so that their GHG impacts can be quantified.

The California Climate Action Registry has existing protocols for GHG reporting that will help frame the work of the drafting team, including a General Reporting Protocol to be used by participating entities to quantify GHG emissions related to energy use, mobile and stationary combustion, and manufacturing, among other things. This general reporting, the most basic level in the Registry, is required of participating entities. The drafting group will provide protocol recommendations related to urban forestry to supplement the General Reporting Protocol, so that participating entities can report GHG emissions and benefits related to urban forestry.

The drafting group will also provide protocol recommendations for discreet urban forestry activities, or “projects,” that are intended to reduce GHG emissions. These recommendations will focus on the activities mentioned earlier—energy efficiency, carbon sequestration and waste utilization. This project-level guidance will incorporate the standardized principles of project-level accounting used by the Registry, the Kyoto Protocol, and other GHG accounting systems.

The California Climate Action Registry also requires third party verification of reported GHG data. In light of this requirement, the drafting group will produce protocol recommendations for third party certification of urban forestry activities at the entity and project levels.

In summary, the drafting group anticipates that the following protocol recommendations will be produced:

1. Appendix to the General Reporting Protocol: Accounting standards and guidance for urban forestry GHG reporting at the entity level.
2. Project-level protocol: Accounting standards and guidance for urban forestry projects that reduce GHG emissions through energy efficiency, carbon sequestration and waste utilization.
3. Third-party verification protocol: Certification guidance for third parties to verify data reported pursuant to the General Reporting Protocol (urban forestry appendix) and urban forestry project-level protocol.

