



## 6. CALIFORNIA: State approves reporting methods for emissions from urban forests, local governments (09/26/2008)

Debra Kahn, *ClimateWire* reporter

California's air agency adopted standards yesterday for measuring voluntary CO2 reductions from local government operations, urban forests and manure digester projects as part of a goal to slash statewide emissions 30 percent by 2020.

The reporting protocols, developed with environmental groups, businesses and local and federal agencies, will lay out common standards and methods of calculating greenhouse gas emissions.

"Today's board adoption marks yet another important step forward in California's goal to cut greenhouse gas emissions 30 percent by 2020," said state Air Resources Board (ARB) acting chairwoman Barbara Riordan.

"These protocols will give municipalities, as well as farmers and others, the guidance they need in moving ahead in their voluntary efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions."

While the state's plan for achieving 169 million metric tons of emissions reductions by 2020 does not assign a concrete target to voluntary actions, the ARB is encouraging businesses, governments and citizens to make voluntary reductions outside the plan's scope.

The guidelines for **local governments** lay out ways for cities and towns to develop inventories of their greenhouse gas emissions. They address emissions from such municipal operations as buildings, traffic signals, wastewater treatment facilities, ports and airports, transit fleets and power generation facilities.

### 'Acupuncture needles' to heal the cities

The **manure digester** protocols provide standards for taking account of a facility's animals, manure handling processes, environmental conditions, CO2 combustion and other factors involved in the generation of electricity from methane.

For **urban forests**, the Air Resources Board approved methods for both reporting and verifying emissions reductions associated with carbon storage in trees. Intended for cities, counties, agencies, utilities and universities, among others, the protocols include guidance on determining location, numbers and types of trees planted, as well as how to account for emissions generated by maintenance activities like trimming and removing downed trees.

Greg McPherson, director of the U.S. Forest Service's Center for Urban Forest Research, said urban tree-planting has the potential to reduce CO2 emissions by 6 million metric tons per year in California, if enough are planted.

California's cities will need 50 million new trees by 2030 just to maintain a ratio of five trees per capita, he said. If climate change requires more than a silver-bullet or even a buckshot solution, trees can be "little BBs," he said. "They are acupuncture needles that can heal our cities, little sponges that can reduce runoff," he said.

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