



COUNTY OF PLACER
Community Development/ Resource Agency

Michael J. Johnson, AICP
Agency Director

PLANNING

MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Board of Supervisors

FROM: Michael J. Johnson, AICP
CDRA Director

DATE: September 22, 2009

SUBJECT: Placer County Board of Supervisors support of the Placer County Air Pollution Control District (APCD) Biomass Waste for Energy Greenhouse Gas Offset Accounting Protocol with a letter of support to the California Board of Forestry.

ACTION REQUESTED:

Authorize the Board Chairman to sign a letter of support for the APCD Biomass Waste for Energy Greenhouse Gas Offset Accounting Protocol to the California State Department of Forestry.

BACKGROUND:

On October 7, 2009, APCD Director Tom Christofk will be presenting a proposed Biomass Waste for Energy Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Offset Accounting Protocol to the CA State Department of Forestry for adoption. The protocol will quantify GHG reductions that are achieved through the use of excess forest biomass resulting from various forest management and hazard reduction activities (or any other biomass wastes) for energy production (e.g. use of waste biomass from forest fuel activities in a biomass boiler to produce electricity). Under normal operations, due to economic considerations, the excess biomass is typically burned in piles, or left to decay in the forest. Using the renewable biomass waste for energy production (such as electricity) displaces the electricity (and associated GHG) generated by burning fossil fuels. Specifically, the biomass-to-energy protocol quantifies the amount and value of both fuel and power that can be realized from the excess biomass recovered as a by-product of forest fuels reduction / forest restoration activities, the GHG emissions from the utility power grid that are displaced by power produced from forest biomass, and ancillary GHG emissions from processing (chipping) and transport operations.

This protocol could potentially produce funding for Placer County that can be used to perform thinning and biomass operations within the forest that will make it healthier and less susceptible to catastrophic fires. The protocol, and its implementation, will provide multiple activities that fit directly in the BOS approved Strategic Plan for the Wildfire Protection and Biomass Utilization Program within Placer County. The PCAPCD has asked several stewardship-minded groups such as the Placer County BOS to write a similar letter on their behalf.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Potential carbon credit offset funding could benefit the County's Biomass Utilization Program since one of the options from this program is to fund biomass operations in the forest.

Respectfully submitted,



MICHAEL J. JOHNSON, AICP
Director of Planning

Attached to this report for the Board's information/consideration are:

ATTACHMENTS:

Exhibit 1: Letter of Support for the Board Of Forestry

cc: Holly Heinzen, Assistant CEO
Tom Christofk, APCD Director
Brett Storey, Senior Management Analyst

County of Placer Board of Supervisors

175 FULWEILER AVENUE
AUBURN, CALIFORNIA 95603
530-889-4010 • FAX: 530-889-4009
PLACER CO. TOLL FREE # 800-488-4308

F. C. "ROCKY" ROCKHOLM
District 1

ROBERT M. WEYGANDT
District 2

JIM HOLMES
District 3

KIRK UHLER
District 4

JENNIFER MONTGOMERY
District 5



September 8, 2009

California Board of Forestry
P.O. Box 944246
Sacramento, CA 94244-2460

Dear Board of Forestry:

The Placer County Board of Supervisors urges the California Board of Forestry to support the Biomass Waste for Energy Greenhouse Gas Offset Accounting Protocol. This protocol will encourage the beneficial use of excess woody biomass to produce renewable energy. The excess biomass addressed in this protocol is otherwise subject to open-burning or decay. Both of these approaches produce significant greenhouse gases and criteria and hazardous air pollutants and do not provide the positive societal benefits of renewable energy production.

While this protocol applies to all types of excess biomass, forest biomass is the largest and most important focus, so it is appropriate for the Board of Forestry to provide a leadership role by supporting adoption of the protocol. Placer County is over 50% forested and as such has been the scene of 7 major fires in the past 10 years. We as the Board of Supervisors have implemented a Strategic Plan for the Wildfire Protection and Biomass Utilization Program to protect our citizens and utilize our resources to bring about a healthier and more fire resilient forest.

There are clear and significant benefits to air quality, energy production and the reduction of greenhouse gases when excess biomass is transported to a facility that uses it to produce energy that displaces fossil fuels. Currently forest management projects designed to reduce the effects of wildfire do not have sufficient economic flexibility to process and transport excess biomass to an energy facility. Placer County has implemented programs to work with the USFS and others to economically remove this material for energy use. But we need assistance to ensure that future forests are sustained for generations. The Biomass Waste for Energy Greenhouse Gas Offset Accounting protocol can help provide the funding needed to produce an economically, socially and ecologically sustainable and beneficial biomass-to-energy program. It is our hope that this protocol is approved and we are able to implement this in our forested communities.

Respectfully submitted,

F. C. "Rocky" Rockholm - Chairman
Placer County Board of Supervisors

