August 28, 2022

Assemblymembers C. Garcia and R. Rivas
1021 O Street
Suites 8140 and 5110
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 1757 (C. Garcia and R. Rivas)- natural carbon sequestration targets and climate change – SUPPORT

Dear Assemblymembers Garcia and Rivas:

We, the undersigned organizations, write today to express our support for your bill, AB 1757, requiring state agencies to set targets for the removal of past carbon dioxide equivalent emissions in the atmosphere through natural carbon sequestration (NCS). NCS is proven, scalable, cost-effective, environmentally sound and just, and leverages practices informed by traditional ecological knowledge– attributes which are critical to addressing the climate crisis at the necessary speed and scale.

The climate crisis threatens increasingly deleterious effects on California's people, land, and economy. Heat extremes and poor air quality have enormous health impacts, especially to frontline communities. Stoked to ever-greater intensities by the climate crisis, wildfires and smoke storms have cost too many lives and billions of dollars in losses. The record breaking multidecadal megadrought now gripping the American West is likely to continue until at least 2030. In 2015 alone, the drought cost the state $2.7 billion and 21,000 jobs in just the agricultural sector. According to one leading climate scientist, many of the crops grown in California today may not be viable by 2027.

As affirmed by the latest report from the IPCC, limiting global warming to the 1.5 degrees Celsius dangerous threshold will require both dramatically cutting emissions *and* removing up to a trillion tons of past climate pollution from the atmosphere. NCS is not a replacement for direct source emission reductions. Recent climate science indicates that California could pass the dangerous 1.5C warming threshold as soon as 2027. Confronting the climate crisis at the speed and scale demanded by the science will require bold action from California and the removal of carbon from the atmosphere will be a pivotal strategy in this effort.

AB 1757 (C. Garcia and R. Rivas) will catalyze natural carbon removal and its many co-benefits in the state by instituting several key elements:

- Requires the California Natural Resources Agency and the Air Resources Board, among other agencies, to establish a range of ambitious targets for natural carbon sequestration on the state's natural and working lands for the years 2030, 2038, and 2045.
- Clarifies that the natural sequestration projects and actions undertaken as part of its implementation cannot be double counted toward other emissions reductions.
- Establishes an Expert Advisory Committee to advise CNRA and CARB on modeling, carbon accounting and implementation strategies. The Committee will be composed of practitioners, technical advisors, researchers, and environmental justice representatives, among other subject matter experts.
- Updates the Climate Smart Land Strategy to achieve the targets and report on progress, benefits, and effectiveness.
- Requires that data be posted every two years outlining progress towards the state's goals and what policy changes or additional resources are needed to achieve the goals.

Setting ambitious natural carbon removal targets is both crucial and achievable. Recent research found that NCS on California's working lands alone could potentially absorb up to 103 MMT CO2e additional per year. Adding sequestration on natural lands and waters further increases what is possible annually with already proven, scalable, cost-effective, environmentally sound, and just methodologies, including practices informed by traditional ecological knowledge.

Practices that enable greater sequestration on NWL help restore the health of soils, vegetation and ecosystems. In doing so, they enhance water and food security, increase resilience to increasing extremes such as drought, heat, wildfires and flooding, and stabilize and improve crop yields. These practices can displace the use of synthetic nitrogen fertilizer, which, when overapplied, pollutes air and water in frontline agricultural communities and is a significant

source of the potent greenhouse gas, nitrous oxide. Application at scale of compost on agricultural lands can also divert food and other organic waste from landfills, reducing emissions of the short lived climate pollutant methane while providing benefits to soil health.

Additionally, it is important to note that technological removal of past climate pollution from the atmosphere, Direct Air Capture, is in its infancy, expensive and energy intensive. The other technology that is often raised in these discussions, carbon capture and storage (CCS), attempts to capture new emissions of fossil fuel pollution at the point source, such as a smokestack, rather than removing existing carbon pollution from the atmosphere. CCS has a long record of underwhelming results that come at great expense. Neither of these technologies provides the significant co-benefits offered by NCS. On top of that, NCS can begin to be implemented immediately with multiple co-benefits for community health, our economy and our environment.

As we saw with other landmark policies like the Renewable Portfolio Standard and the climate targets set by AB and SB 32, the targets developed because of AB 1757 will spur the wider adoption of natural carbon sequestration practices across California, create significant workforce development opportunities, and will allow the state to reap the myriad co-benefits associated with more resilient natural and working lands. By enacting AB 1757, California will scale up natural carbon sequestration from the atmosphere while enhancing water and food security, public health outcomes, environmental justice, climate resilience, biodiversity, and also providing a template that can be replicated across the nation and the world.

For these reasons, we strongly support your bill and look forward to working with you to get the measure enacted.

Sincerely,

Ellie Cohen
The Climate Center

Torri Estrada
Carbon Cycle Institute

Don Butz
California Association of Resource Conservation Districts

Gilly Lyons
The Pew Charitable Trusts

Jennifer Bice
Redwood Hill Farm

Laura Deehan
Environment California

Lynn Wheeler
The Hobo Wine Company

Rick Brown
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Russell Hancock
Joint Venture Silicon Valley

Anthony Myint
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Heidi Harmon
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Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority

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Californians Against Waste

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Long Beach Alliance for Clean Energy

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Audubon Canyon Ranch

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Dan Silver
Endangered Habitats League

Sibella Kraus
Sustainable Agriculture Education (SAGE)

Valerie Ventre-Hutton
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Albert Straus
Straus Family Creamery

Allis Druffel
California Interfaith Power & Light

Shoshana Wechsler
Sunflower Alliance

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Tom Stein
American Farmland Trust

Matthew Baker
Planning and Conservation League

Ector Olivares
Catholic Charities

Raquel Mason
California Environmental Justice Alliance

Cecilia Estolano
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