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The Honorable Ben Allen
Senate Environmental Quality Committee
Submitted Electronically

June 21, 2021

RE: AB 284 (R. Rivas) – Natural and Working Lands Climate Change Goal - SUPPORT

Dear Chairperson Allen,

We are pleased to support AB 284, which directs the California Air Resources Board, working with partner agencies, to set a 2045 goal for natural and working lands carbon sequestration and overall greenhouse gas emission reductions. Scaling and speeding up agroecological climate solutions in our state’s farms, ranches, forests, and wetlands is necessary to ensure food security, health, economic prosperity, and resilience for our communities and future generations.

A report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), *Climate and Land Use*ⁱ finds that we cannot avoid the worst impacts of climate change without transformation in our agricultural and natural resource sectors. A 2018 IPCC reportⁱⁱ identified soil carbon sequestration as having the greatest potential for reducing emissions at the lowest cost. As the largest agricultural state in the country, California can and should lead the nation in these efforts.

While the coronavirus pandemic has broad impacts, including disruptions to our food and agriculture supply chains, the state’s farmers remain committed to building climate resilience. In 2020, record numbers of farmers and dairy producers applied to the California Healthy Soils Program and the Alternative Manure Management Program – two key Climate Smart Agriculture programs that increase carbon sinks, reduce methane emissions, enhance biodiversity, and support more resilient farms and ranches. We must scale up this work and AB 284 will set us on that path.

AB 284 recognizes the importance of developing a roadmap for natural and working lands climate strategies in the state. We need goals and policy pathways to advance this work so that our farms, forests and wetlands become necessary carbon sinks, helping the state meet its carbon neutrality goal, while improving environmental and health outcomes for all.

We respectfully ask for your support for AB 284.

Sincerely,

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ALBA

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California Policy Manager
American Farmland Trust

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ⁱ See: <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/srccl/>

ⁱⁱ See: <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/>