



Our mission

Deliver rapid greenhouse gas reductions at scale, starting in California.

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June 17, 2021

Assemblymember Luz Rivas
Chair, Assembly Natural Resources Committee
State Capitol, Room 3126
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 27 (Skinner) – SUPPORT with Recommendations

Dear Chair Rivas,

The Climate Center is pleased to support, with recommendations for your consideration, SB 27 (Skinner). The Climate Center, a climate and energy policy nonprofit, works for rapid greenhouse gas reductions at scale through our Climate-Safe California campaign, which aims to accelerate state climate policy timelines and achieve net-negative emissions by 2030.

SB 27 advances the state's efforts to combat climate change by directing state agencies to establish the Natural and Working Lands Climate Smart Strategy, the California Air Resource Board (CARB) to add carbon sequestration to the state's climate protection planning efforts, and the state to partner with private entities to identify and fund California-based carbon sequestration projects.

The United Nation's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) concluded in 2018 that preventing dangerous impacts of climate change globally will require not only cutting greenhouse gas emissions essentially in half by 2030 but also scaling up the removal of emissions already put in the atmosphere from human activity by deploying enhanced land use practices. In the short time since the publication of that report, new studies¹ show that we will pass the 1.5C threshold of dangerous warming within the next decade, at least 10 years earlier than the IPCC expected. This harsh reality calls for accelerated emission reductions as well as accelerated investments in nature-based sequestration.

¹ Xu, Y., et al, Global Warming will Happen Faster than We Think, *Nature*, Dec 2018, 564(7734):30-32 DOI: [10.1038/d41586-018-07586-5](https://doi.org/10.1038/d41586-018-07586-5); Warszawski et al. All options, not silver bullets, needed to limit global warming to 1.5°C: a scenario appraisal. *Environmental Research Letters*, 2021; DOI: [10.1088/1748-9326/abfeec](https://doi.org/10.1088/1748-9326/abfeec); Kammen et al Accelerating the timeline for climate action in California. <https://arxiv.org/abs/2103.07801>

Fortunately, effective carbon sequestration solutions exist today. A 2020 report by Lawrence Livermore National Labs² concluded that carbon sequestration on natural and working lands can be among the least expensive ways to mitigate climate change. Land-based carbon sequestration projects like healthy soils agricultural practices including compost application and silviculture as well as habitat restoration (e.g., riparian, coastal wetland and montane meadows), and sustainable forestry management, use nature’s own processes to pull carbon out of the atmosphere and store it for extended periods of time. These natural systems also help communities be more resilient to drought, wildfire, and other extremes—a benefit that is critically important as California is currently in the early stages of a severe multi-decadal drought.

The Climate Center strongly supports scaling up investments in sequestration on natural and working lands, and establishing bold near-term state targets through the Natural and Working Lands Climate Smart Strategy, as key approaches to both climate mitigation and adaptation in California. Managing natural and working lands for sequestration provides numerous co-benefits including enhanced soil water holding capacity, aquifer replenishment, air quality, biodiversity, food security, job creation, and resilience.

Nascent direct air capture (DAC) technology that removes heat-trapping carbon dioxide from the atmosphere has the potential to be a contributor to climate stability in the future. The Climate Center supports the further testing and development of DAC technologies only if they are conducted in an ecologically-friendly manner and if they are beneficial to the climate as well as communities surrounding these facilities. We, however, oppose the use of Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) technologies that allow the continued development, production and use of fossil fuels, with disproportionate deleterious impacts on lower income communities and many communities of color, as well as on the climate and environment.

- **We support establishing workforce development goals for good, high road jobs in both nature-based and technological sequestration in SB 27.**

SB 27 establishes a registry of carbon sequestration projects at the Office of Planning and Research for potential public and private investment and requires CARB to track carbon benefits of these projects. The Climate Center supports initiatives such as this that have the potential to catalyze innovation and channel market forces resulting in climate-friendly choices available to everyone, from farmers to consumers.

- **The Climate Center recommends including additional language in SB 27 to ensure that this registry of sequestration projects does not unduly burden ranchers and farmers with unintended barriers or complexity in all aspects of the program from initial registry enrollment to implementation, monitoring and reporting. These programs must be as accessible as possible for as many producers as possible and offer them some level of confidentiality.**

² https://www-gs.llnl.gov/content/assets/docs/energy/Getting_to_Neutral.pdf

- **We urge adding language that the state will provide technical assistance to ensure the greatest participation so the program can successfully scale.**

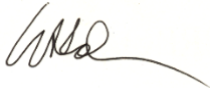
As the Los Angeles Times banner headline read on September 13, 2020: *California's Climate Apocalypse: Fires, heat, air pollution. The calamity is no longer in the future. It's here. Now.* To lessen the crisis and its deadly, costly impacts, every tool available must be put to use to reduce emissions and capture the carbon that has already been released while slowing down further carbon loss and reducing the impacts of increasing extremes. Healthier natural and working lands will reduce the impacts of climate change on our communities, our economy and our health.

For these reasons, The Climate Center supports SB 27 (Skinner) and respectfully requests your "AYE" vote, with consideration of the recommendations above.

The Climate Center's [Climate Safe California](#) campaign outlines the need for and a path toward such urgently required goals. Please do not hesitate to be in touch if we might provide additional helpful information.

Thank you for your urgently needed climate leadership.

Sincerely,



Ellie M. Cohen
Chief Executive Officer

CC: Members, Assembly Natural Resources Committee
Senator Nancy Skinner