

To: Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund Program

From: **Jared Blumenfeld**, Secretary for Environmental Protection, California Environmental Protection Agency
Richard W. Corey, Executive Officer, California Air Resources Board

Date: January 20, 2021

Subject: Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund: California Air Resources Board Expenditure Record for Fiscal Year 2019-20, Prescribed Fire Monitoring

This Attestation Memorandum documents that the California Air Resources Board (CARB) completed the attached Expenditure Record on November 9, 2020, for Prescribed Fire Monitoring. The Expenditure Record is consistent with the statutory requirements of Government Code Section 16428.9 to support expenditures from the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund.

This Attestation Memorandum and Expenditure Record will be submitted to CARB's Sustainable Transportation and Communities Division for public posting on the California Climate Initiative website at: www.arb.ca.gov/caclimateinvestments. Questions on this Attestation Memorandum or Expenditure Record may be directed to Michael Benjamin at (916) 201-8968 or michael.benjamin@arb.ca.gov.

Attachment

cc: Michael Benjamin, D. Env., Division Chief, Air Quality Planning and Science Division
Jennifer Gress, Division Chief, Sustainable Transportation and Communities Division

California Air Resources Board

Expenditure Record for Prescribed Fire Program

Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund: Expenditure Record

Prescribed Fire Monitoring-FY2019

Authorizing legislation: Item 3900-101-3228 of the Budget Act of 2019 (Assembly Bill 74), chaptered June 27, 2019 as Chapter 23.

Element (1)

A description of each expenditure proposed to be made by the administering agency pursuant to the appropriation.

Element 1	Description
Agency that will administer funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> California Air Resources Board (CARB)
Amount of proposed expenditure and appropriation reference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The total FY 2019 expenditure is \$2,000,000 in assistance grant funding to the local air districts and the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association (CAPCOA) for assistance with increased monitoring of prescribed burns in FY2020.
Estimated amount of expenditures for administering agency administrative costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administrative costs were absorbed by CARB.
If applicable, identify laws or regulations that govern how funds will be used	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Governor's Executive Order B-52-18</i>-Promotes improved forest management and restoration, and reduces barriers to the use of prescribed burning. <i>SB 1260</i>-Requires CARB and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), in coordination with local air districts, to develop and fund a CARB program to enhance air quality and smoke monitoring and provide a public awareness campaign regarding prescribed burns. The bill also intends to promote long-term forest health and wildfire resiliency through fire prevention and forestry management projects undertaken by CAL FIRE and federal land management agencies.
Continuation of existing Expenditure Record	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is a continuing program. The initial Expenditure Record for this program was approved and submitted on January 22, 2019.
Project type(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Air quality monitoring of prescribed burns and public education.
Describe the projects and/or measures that will be eligible for funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grants to local air districts and CAPCOA to facilitate increased smoke monitoring from prescribed fires and related public outreach. Development of a mobile application that the public can download to provide geographically-tailored information on the cause(s) of smoke in their area, along with information on what to do to minimize smoke impacts.

Element 1	Description
Intended recipients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local public agencies • Research institutions • Non-profit associations and organizations • Private consultants
Program structure and process for selecting projects for funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solicitation, evaluation, and selection of qualified projects according to program guidelines. • Applicants for a solicitation must submit a proposal to CARB or CAPCOA as CARB’s agent. CARB reviews applications for completeness and fulfillment of selection criteria. Projects are scored against selection criteria, and qualifying projects are selected for funding. • Grant to CAPCOA to provide support to local air districts.

Element (2)

A description of how a proposed expenditure will further the regulatory purposes of Division 25.5 (commencing with Section 38500) of the Health and Safety Code, including, but not limited to, the limit established under Part 3 (commencing with Section 38550) and other applicable requirements of law.

Element 2	Description
How the expenditure is consistent with the Investment Plan and the Scoping Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assembly Bill 1532 requires that GGRF funds be appropriated in a manner that is consistent with the three-year Cap-and-Trade Auction Proceeds Second Investment Plan. The Second Investment Plan recommends that the forest sector perform several actions to achieve positive climate benefits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For forest-related black carbon, improving the health and resiliency of forests and reducing wildfire risk and severity through active management. This program reduces wildfire risk. - Continuing to promote management to improve forest health as a mechanism to foster sustainable forests for long-term carbon storage. This program improves forest health. • The 2017 Update to the Climate Change Scoping Plan identified key strategies and recommendations to continue reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and achieve the goals and purposes of Health and Safety Code Division 25.5. The update to the Scoping Plan recommends: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Investment in strategies that ensure forested lands are managed in ways that maximize their carbon benefits while also ensuring landscape resilience; protecting and enhancing the State’s water supplies; safeguarding the State’s wildlife, fish, and plants; and promoting sustainable rural communities. Increasing prescribed fire is a means of managing forested lands for carbon benefits and landscape resilience.

Element (3)

A description of how a proposed expenditure will contribute to achieving and maintaining greenhouse gas emission reductions pursuant to Division 25.5 (commencing with Section 38500) of the Health and Safety Code.

Element 3	Description
<p>Describe how expenditures will facilitate the achievement of GHG emission reductions in the State</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased smoke monitoring enables more accurate assessment and review of the forest fuel reduction projects undertaken by CAL FIRE and federal land management agencies. These activities, in turn, result in net greenhouse gas and air pollution benefits. • The program helps improve the stability of forest carbon through activities that promote forest resilience; increase carbon sequestration and storage; reduce mortality and associated GHG emissions from wildfire, drought, and pest damage; and restore impacted landscapes through reforestation. This is accomplished by forest fuel reduction treatments in the form of increased prescribed burning, which reduces the threat of catastrophic wildfires. • Fuel reduction treatments including prescribed fire reduce fuel loading, thereby reducing the risk of large, uncontrolled wildfires and associated GHG emissions while also improving the stability of forest carbon in remaining vegetation. The result is that the best, healthiest trees remain for greater carbon sequestration and fire, drought, and pest resistance. Thinning overstocked stands reduces competition among trees, thereby promoting carbon sequestration and reducing premature mortality.
<p>Explain when GHG emission reductions and/or co-benefits are expected to occur and how they will be maintained</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fuels reduction treatments are an initial source of GHG emissions as biomass is removed from the treatment area. A net GHG and air pollution benefit from fuel reduction activities occurs as a result of improved tree growth, and avoided wildfire emissions from an expected reduction in fire severity. The time required to achieve a net GHG and air pollution benefit will vary depending on site characteristics and treatments employed but is expected to be achieved between 7 and 15 years.

Element (4)

A description of how the administering agency considered the applicability and feasibility of other non-greenhouse gas reduction objectives of Division 25.5 (commencing with Section 38500) of the Health and Safety Code.

Element 4	Description
<p>Expected co-benefits, particularly environmental, economic, public health and safety, and climate resiliency</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CARB’s support of air monitoring for prescribed burns provides the public with information not routinely available on air quality in their area and promotes community engagement. • Forest health projects take many forms (e.g., reforestation, pest control, etc.) and the specific co-benefits achieved by each forest health project vary depending on the activities employed. Despite the variation, all forest health projects are expected to result in healthier, more resilient forests that provide numerous co-benefits including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Reducing the number and intensity of catastrophic wildfires, thereby leading to improvement of air quality. – Avoiding or reducing the associated ecological impacts to forests from catastrophic wildfire. – Maintaining or improving water quality by impeding erosive runoff that can discharge sediments into streams. – Supporting healthy resilient forests that are more resistant to fire and climate change. – Creating well-managed forested landscapes that lessen the risk to life, public safety, and infrastructure. – Supporting biodiversity and wildlife adaptation to climate change and maintain functional wildlife habitat for state and federally listed species. – Maintaining functional refugia and migration corridors for wildlife. – Maintaining diversity of natural communities that are increasingly stressed by climate change. – Preserving cultural resources. – Enhancing recreational opportunities and tourism revenue.
<p>How the project will support other objectives of AB 32 and related statutes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CARB’s enhanced air monitoring and public awareness program meets CARB’s directives in Senate Bill 1260 (Chapter 642, Statutes of 2018) to develop and fund a program to enhance air quality and smoke monitoring, and to provide a public awareness campaign regarding prescribed burns. • Fuel reduction treatments and forest health projects also support the broader objective to improve air quality by reduction of wildfire emissions, including air toxics.
<p>Percentage of total funding that will be expended for projects that are located in and benefit priority populations¹ per CARB guidance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fuel reduction treatments and forest health projects are not typically conducted within disadvantaged communities due to the location of forested lands in rural areas. However, the program is expected to fund projects that are located in and will provide benefits to rural low-income communities. It will have the indirect benefit of reducing smoke exposure from major wildfires.

¹ Priority populations include residents of: (1) census tracts identified as disadvantaged by California Environmental Protection Agency per SB 535; (2) census tracts identified as low-income per AB 1550; or (3) a low-income household per AB 1550. See Section VII.B for more information on the definitions of priority populations.

Element 4	Description
Describe the benefits to priority populations per CARB guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CARB’s support for air monitoring of prescribed burns will provide the public with information not routinely available on air quality in their area. These data will also allow air districts to better understand local air quality and thus improve the burn permitting process and minimize impacts to local communities. • Fuel reduction treatments and forest health projects including prescribed fire are expected to provide significant air quality benefits statewide due to a reduction in the number and intensity of catastrophic wildfires. • The projects provide direct air quality benefits to communities affected by wildland fires. It is expected that some of these communities will be low-income communities.
Explain strategies the administering agency will use to maximize benefits to disadvantaged communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not applicable.
Explain how the administering agency will avoid potential substantial burdens to disadvantaged communities and low-income communities or, if unknown, explain the process for identifying and avoiding potential substantial burdens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CARB’s enhanced air monitoring and public awareness program is designed to avoid and mitigate the potential public health impacts of emissions from prescribed fires on surrounding communities, by incorporating smoke modeling forecasts and an improved public awareness process. • CARB’s program provides funds to local air districts to improve prescribed fire planning, permitting and monitoring capabilities, which will allow the districts and local communities to make decisions that limit adverse health effects.

Element (5)

A description of how the administering agency will document the result achieved from the expenditure to comply with Division 25.5 (commencing with Section 35800) of the Health and Safety Code.

Element 5	Description
How the administering agency will track / report progress to make sure projects are implemented per requirements in statute and CARB guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CARB requires funding recipients to maintain records and submit annual status reports. • In addition, CARB conducts periodic reviews of selected projects and air district participation. If a funding recipient does not perform in accordance with CARB’s program requirements, the recipient will be subject to the remedies for non-performance, as identified in CARB’s guidelines.
Describe the approach that will be used to document GHG emission reductions and/or other benefits before and after project completion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As sufficient data on prescribed fire smoke emissions becomes available and wildfire smoke reductions can be estimated, CARB staff will calculate the net GHG reductions from the projects described herein, using CARB-approved methods.

Element 5	Description
<p>Type of information that will be collected to document results, consistent with CARB guidance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To determine any job benefits, the agency will compile data from funding recipients on jobs provided, both the quality and quantity, consistent with CARB guidance. • CARB will report on the numbers of prescribed fires that are planned, approved and conducted under local air district jurisdiction. • CARB will report on the numbers of prescribed fires that are monitored for air quality using resources, and equipment acquired through this project. • CARB will report on the numbers of acres treated with prescribed burning, and on progress toward meeting the Governor’s directive to eventually treat 500,000 acres of state lands and 500,000 acres of federal lands. • CARB will report on the number of pieces of equipment purchased through this program. • CARB will report on the number of proposals received for the development of a smoke app, and details on the release and use of the app.
<p>How the administering agency will report on program status</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CARB will compile and report annually on results described above, plus expenditures, status of grant projects, and project benefits in reports that follow CARB guidelines. At a minimum, such reports will include expenditures, net GHG benefit and co-benefits, and acres treated.