June 5, 2014

Re: Support for cap-and-trade funding for sustainable agriculture and farmland conservation

Dear Pro Tem Steinberg, Speaker Atkins, Senators Leno, Hancock, Lara and Nielsen and Assemblymembers Skinner, Bloom, Weber and Gorrell,

As agricultural leaders in our communities, we write to urge your support for investing a portion of the cap-and-trade auction proceeds in agricultural activities that reduce greenhouse emissions, sequester carbon in soils and woody biomass and produce on-farm renewable energy.

Such investments in our communities can create jobs, spur innovation and improve our environment. The Governor’s cap-and-trade budget proposal represents an important initial investment in farmland conservation and agricultural management strategies that will support farmers and ranchers in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Sustainable and organic agriculture can provide unique climate solutions. For example, improving water and energy use efficiency will not only lower greenhouse gas emissions but can also lower costs for growers. Our farms and ranches can be net-energy producers, producing on-farm renewable energy from bioenergy, solar and wind power. Soil management strategies like cover cropping, compost application and reduced tillage can increase the organic content of soils, improve soil water holding capacity and in turn remove carbon from the atmosphere and slow climate change—a unique property of natural and working lands.

We support expanding the eligible projects in the Governor’s proposal to allow for funding of on-farm research and demonstration projects that provide on-the-ground support and data-driven research that supports reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing carbon sequestration in agriculture.

We support the inclusion of farmland conservation as part of the Sustainable Communities Strategy funding lead by the Strategic Growth Council. Farmland conservation provides the triple bottom line of reduced vehicle miles traveled, increased carbon sequestration and avoided emissions associated with land conversion and urban development.
Many of California’s rural communities struggle with high unemployment. Cap-and-trade investments will protect and create jobs, support our agricultural economy and invest in disadvantaged communities.

Thank you for your leadership on these issues.

Sincerely,

Cathy Calfo, Executive Director
CCOF

Dave Henson, Executive Director
Occidental Arts and Ecology Center

Dave Runsten, Policy Director
Community Alliance with Family Farmers

Geoffrey Davies PhD and Elham A. Ghabbour PhD, Directors
National Soil Project

Jo Ann Baumgartner, Director
Wild Farm Alliance

John Vawter and Riley Davenport, Publishers
Edible San Diego

Ken Dickerson, Executive Director
Ecological Farming Association

Kris Beal, Executive Director
Vineyard Team

Kris Jensen, Executive Director
Collective Roots

Lynne McBride, Executive Director
California Farmers Union

Mary Kimball, Executive Director
Center for Land-Based Learning

Matthew Marsom, Vice President for Public Policy & Programs
Public Health Institute

Nancy Casady, General Manager
Ocean Beach People's Organic Food Market

Rebecca Spector, West Coast Director
The Center for Food Safety

Reggie Knox, Executive Director
California FarmLink

Rex Dufour, California Office Manager
National Center for Appropriate Technology

Rich Rominger
Farmer; Secretary California Department of Food and Agriculture 1977-1982; Deputy Secretary U. S. Department of Agriculture 1993-2001
Sibella Kraus, Executive Director
SAGE

**Farmers & Ranchers**

*Butte County:*
Cynthia A. Daley, Sweet Grass Organics, Inc.
Mel and Mary Thompson, Sierra Farms Lamb

*Contra Costa County:*
Kristie and Rick Knoll, Knoll Farms

*Fresno County:*
Brad Bryce, Bar 2B Ranch
John M. Teixeira, Lone Willow Ranch

*Marin County:*
Albert Straus, Straus Family Creamery
Ione Conlan, Conlan Ranches

*Merced County:*
Jean Okuye, Okuye Farms

*Nevada County:*
Amigo Bob Cantisano, Heaven and Earth Farm

*Placer County:*
Tammi Riedl, Lincoln Hills Farm

*Sacramento County:*
Shawn Harrison, Soil Born Farms

*San Benito County:*
Joe and Julie Morris, Morris Grassfed

*San Francisco County:*
Robert MacKimmie, City Bees

*San Mateo County:*
Biraj Palmer, Ananda Valley Farm
Erin Tormey, Irish Ridge Ranch
Jered Lawson and Nancy Vail, Pie Ranch

*San Diego County:*
Cathryn Henning and Mel Lions, Wild Willow Farm and Education Center

*Santa Cruz County:*
David Gates, Jr., Ridge Vineyards
Jim Cochran, Swanton Berry Farm
Ken Kimes, New Natives Farm
Stephen Pedersen and Jeanne Byrne, High Ground Organics
Thomas Broz, Live Earth Farm

*Solano County:*
Craig McNamara, Sierra Orchards
Jenny Lester Moffitt, Dixon Ridge Farms
Moira Burke, Agricola: flora et fauna

*Sonoma County:*
Keith Abeles, Quetzal Farm
Terry Harrison, Foxwhelp Farm
San Luis Obispo County:
Ryan Rich
Four Elements Organics

Tehama County:
Bill Burrows, Burrows Ranch Inc.
Frank and Vicky Dawley, Big Bluff Ranch

Yolo County:
James Durst, Durst Organic Growers Inc.
John Anderson, Hedgerow Farms
Judith Redmond, Full Belly Farm
Paul Underhill, Terra Firma Farm