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Governor's Budget Invests in Agricultural Solutions to Climate Change
Farmers, sustainable agriculture coalition laud efforts to address climate change

Governor Jerry Brown released his proposed state budget today, following up on his promises to invest in climate change solutions in California—including in the state's agriculture sector. The Governor included investments to spur climate change innovations on our farms and ranches, including increasing carbon storage in soils. In Monday's State of the State address, Governor Brown also called for agricultural climate solutions, saying, "We must manage farm and rangelands, forests and wetlands so they can store carbon."

"Governor Brown recognizes that California cannot meet its ambitious greenhouse gas goals without investing in climate change solutions from our farms and ranches," said Renata Brillinger, Executive Director with the California Climate and Agriculture Network (CalCAN). "The Governor's budget is an important start to climate-friendly farming. More will be needed to reach the state's 77,000 farmers and unleash the potential of agriculture's climate solutions."

CalCAN is a coalition of the state's leading sustainable agriculture organizations and farmer allies. Since 2009, CalCAN has cultivated farmer leadership to face the challenges of climate change and to serve as the sustainable agriculture voice on climate change policy in California.

An important initial investment in farmland conservation was made in the FY 2014-15 budget with an allocation of \$5 million in cap-and-trade funds. However, though the total cap-and-trade allocations increased in the current budget proposal, the amount for farmland conservation was not increased. This is a missed opportunity: protecting farmland has significant emission reduction benefits. One acre of urban land emits 70 times more greenhouse gases than an acre of irrigated farmland.¹

According to Brillinger, "A modest investment of \$20 million for farmland conservation would contribute much to the state's greenhouse gas reduction target."

By 2030, agricultural mitigation measures in the United States and Canada have the potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 374 MtCO₂e annually, the equivalent of taking nearly 80 million cars off the road every year.² On-farm renewable energy—including solar, wind, and bioenergy—can also offset GHG emissions. Between 2009 and 2012, the number of California farmers producing renewable energy almost tripled to nearly 6,000 on-farm renewable energy systems; about 8% of all California growers now create clean energy.³

For stories of farmers taking on climate change, see: <http://calclimateag.org/farmer-stories/>

¹ See: <http://www.energy.ca.gov/2012publications/CEC-500-2012-032/CEC-500-2012-032.pdf>

² See IPCC report at: http://www.ipcc.ch/publications_and_data/ar4/wg3/en/ch8s8-4-3.html. See: <http://www.epa.gov/cleanenergy/energy-resources/calculator.html#results>

³ USDA NASS. 2014. 2012 Census of Agriculture State Data: California, Table 52: Energy.