

To: California City Officials

From: Bill Higgins  
Legislative Representative & Sr. Staff Attorney

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RE: Twelve Point Summary of the RTAC Report

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This memo lists 12 recommendations that the Regional Targets Advisory Committee (Committee) made to the Air Resources Board (ARB) related to setting greenhouse gas (GhG) emission targets under SB 375. This list is not comprehensive, more detail is in the actual report (47 pages). ARB will consider the report at its November 19 meeting.

- 1. *Uniform Statewide Metric Preferred.*** The Committee recommends that ARB adopt a uniform statewide target expressed as a per capita reduction metric (for example: x percent reduction in GhG emissions per household) from 2005 levels. The per capita metric was believed to be fair, easily understood, and supportable with current data. Setting the base year at 2005 base year allows regions to get some credit for actions already taken to reduce emissions (at least within the last 4 years).
- 2. *Need for Regional Flexibility Recognized.*** In addition to recommending their own target as provided by SB 375, regions should be able to seek an adjustment to the statewide target if needed. Such adjustments would be subject to a “reasonably tough test.” MPOs should also retain the flexibility to incorporate innovative measures appropriate to the region’s unique characteristics.
- 3. *“Ambitious Achievable” Targets.*** ARB charged the Committee to develop a process that would yield “ambitious achievable” targets. The Committee determined that this required something well beyond “business as usual” and that a region should do everything feasible to achieve the target. Even where a region uses an APS, it’s SCS should nevertheless include all feasible measures to reduce GhG emissions.
- 4. *Seven Step Collaboration to Set Statewide Target.*** The Committee recommends a seven step process for developing the statewide target that involves consulting with the metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs). The process involves developing a baseline and then examining alternative scenarios to determine what is at the upper ranges of achievable (ambitious achievable) before draft and final targets are set in June and September of 2010, respectively.
- 5. *Use of Existing Travel Demand and Other Modeling Methods.*** Although there is no perfect tool to measure GhG reductions, existing travel demand and other modeling tools should be used to estimate GhG reductions to the extent that they are capable. The models used by the 18 MPOs vary widely in their ability to accurately project

GhG reductions. Thus, MPOs should also analyze its modeling capability. Where needed, the model may need to be supplemented with other information—such as the BMP list (see next bullet)—to compensate for modeling limitations.

- 6. *Creation and Use of a Best Management Practice (BMP) List.*** ARB should also develop a BMP list that will estimate the GhG reductions from specific strategies. The list would be based on science and data and provide a user-friendly tool to facilitate public interaction. It would also help ARB and the regions set targets and measure performance. It could also be used, at least in the short term, by small MPOs as the sole method to demonstrate compliance.
- 7. *High Levels of Public Engagement Vital.*** Establishing a system of transparency, participation, and collaboration will ensure public trust and strengthen the process. Any public education effort should put forward a positive image of integrated planning, explain the changes of Assembly Bill 32 and Senate Bill 375, elicit input, and increase awareness of the co-benefits of GhG reduction strategies (see point 10).
- 8. *Addressing the Current Economic Crisis.*** The current economic crisis must be taken into account in determining what is achievable. The forecasting methods currently used to develop RTPs should reflect these conditions. Thus, the recent recession will be reflected as these forecasts are updated for RTPs developed under SB 375.
- 9. *Housing and Social Equity.*** ARB should ensure completion of research so that housing benefits are incorporated into modeling and BMP list. In addition, adverse consequences of changing land use patterns, such as displacement, should be mitigated in the planning strategies submitted by MPOs. “Visioning” tools should be developed to enable the public to see the equity impacts—such as, transit access, household costs, and housing supply—of proposed strategies.
- 10. *Monitoring Co-Benefits.*** Many other advantages can result when a range of transportation options is offered. These include increased mobility, economic benefits, reduced air and water pollution, and healthier communities. MPOs should identify, highlight, and to the extent possible, quantify these co-benefits.
- 11. *State Allocation of Resources Should Support Goals.*** The most frequently cited implementation barriers were cuts to transit funding and redevelopment, and the lack of funds for new community-based plans, zoning changes, and programmatic environmental reviews. The State should fund the programs necessary for local and regional governments to actually implement the developed set of regional strategies.
- 12. *Improvements for Subsequent Target Setting.*** ARB should monitor the effectiveness of regional strategies to inform subsequent rounds of target setting. One approach would be to adopt a set of performance indicators that represent an effective means of implementation (for example, track vehicles miles traveled or housing mix and density). In addition, the state should continue to invest in activity-based, integrated land use, and economic modeling that go beyond current capabilities.