



AB 32: Global Warming Solutions Act

11/2007

California Climate Choices

A Fact Sheet of the Union of Concerned Scientists

AB 32 was passed by the state legislature signed into law by Governor Schwarzenegger in 2006. AB 32 sets in place the nation's most comprehensive, economy-wide global warming emissions reduction program.

AB 32 requires the state's global warming emissions to be reduced to 1990 levels by 2020. This reduction will be accomplished through an enforceable statewide cap on global warming emissions that will be phased in starting in 2012.

In order to effectively implement the cap, AB 32 directs the California Air Resources Board (CARB) to develop appropriate regulations and establish a mandatory reporting system to track and monitor global warming emissions levels. CARB is also the agency that will enforce the new regulations.

MANDATORY EMISSIONS REPORTING

By January 1, 2008, CARB must adopt regulations creating a statewide global warming emissions reporting and monitoring system. The largest emitters will be required to report their emissions on an annual basis.

SETTING THE CAP

Also by January 1, 2008, CARB must determine what the level of global warming emissions was in 1990. That level will become the emissions cap that must be met by 2020.

THE DETAILS—A PLAN FOR MAKING REAL REDUCTIONS

By June 30, 2007, CARB must develop a list of early action measures to be adopted by January 1, 2010 that can reduce emissions in the short term.

By January 1, 2009, CARB must prepare a plan for how the 2020 cap can be met in the most cost-effective manner. This plan may include a series of regulatory actions, as well as a recommendation for a "cap-and-trade" system in which carbon emissions "credits" in the amount of the cap are auctioned or

distributed and carbon emitters may buy and sell these credits in order to comply with the law.

If a cap-and-trade system is developed, it is mandatory that the system be designed to prevent any increase in the emission of toxic or criteria air contaminants.

CARB will hold a series of public workshops on the plan and give interested parties a chance to make comments.

IMPLEMENTING REGULATIONS

On or before January 1, 2011, CARB must officially put into place specific regulations to achieve the global warming emission reductions. These regulations must be in effect by the start of 2012.

The bill requires CARB to ensure that regulations to reduce global warming emissions meet several criteria. The regulations must:

- ensure that global warming emissions reductions are real, permanent, quantifiable, verifiable, enforceable and additional (i.e. new emissions reductions, not those that would otherwise occur);
- not disproportionately impact low-income communities;
- complement, and not interfere with, efforts to achieve and maintain federal and state air quality standards and reduce toxic air pollution emissions; and
- minimize leakage (where reductions in global warming emissions within California are offset by increases in emissions outside the state).

The regulations may also include setting declining annual emissions reduction targets, starting in 2012.

UCS INVOLVEMENT

UCS is actively engaged with CARB and various stakeholders to help create a sound policy framework for achieving the global warming emissions reductions called for by AB 32.

