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## **CLIMATE CHANGE: California Adopts Voluntary Standards for Forestry CO<sub>2</sub> Reductions**

Arthur O'Donnell, *Land Letter* editor

During its Oct. 25 meeting, the California Air Resources Board unanimously approved the nation's first standards for forest-generated carbon dioxide reductions.

The Forest Protocols, previously adopted by the California Climate Action Registry, were developed in a collaborative process over a four-year period. They will help quantify emissions reductions from forest management practices aside from planting more trees, said Laurie Wayburn, president of the Pacific Forest Trust of San Francisco, which helped spur the development of the standards.

"This is the first time that the power of conserving land is recognized as a tool for reducing carbon," she told *Land Letter*. "These are clear, strong standards that are being used to meet regulatory targets."

According to CARB's staff report recommending the adoption of the protocols, "Forests can absorb [sequester] and store carbon long-term, and they have the potential to provide significant greenhouse gas reductions when managed for carbon benefits."

The agency projects that California's forests could remove about 10 million metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalents by 2020, out of the 174 million ton reductions targeted under A.B. 32. In order for voluntary reductions expected from the forest protocols to be counted under A.B. 32, CARB must also adopt regulations for verification and enforcement.

At its meeting, the agency also called on its staff to work with stakeholders to develop further standards for other forest projects, including industrial forestlands, projects on public lands and urban forestry programs.