

San Francisco Chronicle

December 9, 2008

Letter to the Editor:

Climate Leadership

Delegates to the United Nations climate summit in Poznan, Poland, this week are encouraged by President-elect Obama's promise of "a new era" in U.S. climate leadership, a vision he unveiled at the Global Climate Summit in Los Angeles. His choice of venue affirms California's climate credentials ("California, still the climate leader," Nov. 21).

The state's wise inclusion of the forest sector in its landmark plan for reducing global warming emissions should serve as an example for those negotiating a successor to the Kyoto Protocol. Forest loss and degradation account for 20 percent of all global emissions. This problem was recognized, but not addressed, in Kyoto and is a leading agenda item in Poznan.

California has pioneered an innovative model for maintaining and enhancing the essential climate benefits forests provide.

This week, the state's Air Resources Board is expected to formalize its climate plan, providing for comprehensive monitoring of carbon gains and losses from forests and activities in related sectors, like burning biomass for energy. The plan also calls for mitigating forest carbon losses and, with rigorous accounting, marketing forest-based emissions reductions. The international community should follow California's example, by creating similar programs and incentives to keep standing forests standing for the benefit of us all.

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