



# The Sacramento Bee

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## **Air Resources Board Can Take Dramatic Steps** **Wide array of early-action measures will lead to major cuts in greenhouse gases**

California's global warming law – Assembly Bill 32 – sets tight deadlines for enacting regulations to reduce greenhouse gases 25 percent by 2020.

One such deadline required the California Air Resources Board, by July of this year, to approve "early-action" measures to reduce emissions in advance of a more comprehensive program.

The air board met the July deadline, but by anyone's standard, the board's proposals were not nearly as far-reaching as the law intended. Partly because of disputes with the Schwarzenegger administration, the board approved a mere three items in June. Soon afterward the governor fired the board's chairman, and its executive officer resigned.

Since taking the helm in July, CARB Chair Mary Nichols and her staff have worked to expand the agency's strategies. On Thursday and Friday, the board will consider an additional 41 early-action measures – some fairly simple, others more complex. If all were enacted, the 41 actions and the three earlier ones would reduce California's greenhouse gases by 42 million metric tons – about a quarter of the tonnage the state must cut by 2020 to meet the law's requirements.

While there's not enough space to detail all 41, three of these measures deserve special attention and should be approved by the air board when it meets:

- **Retrofitting of long-haul trucks and trailers:** Heavy duty trucks consume more than 3 billion gallons of diesel fuel each year. That means even small improvements in fuel economy could mean big reductions in both greenhouse gases and air pollution. To improve fuel economy, the air board staff has identified a mix of side skirts, roof fairings and other devices that can make trucks and trailers more aerodynamic.

By phasing in retrofits of these devices on truck-trailers that are registered in California and travel through it, the state could reduce greenhouse emissions by an estimated 20

million metric tons a year, including 2 million metric tons generated in California yearly, according to estimates by the air board's staff. They also would reduce air pollution, particularly in the Central Valley.

- Electrification of ports: When cargo ships dock at California's ports, they often run auxiliary engines to power refrigeration and other equipment. These engines spew massive amounts of pollution, including greenhouse gases and diesel soot.

The board's proposal would require ports to make electrical outlets available so ships could power their equipment while docked without running their engines. Such a measure would reduce about 500,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide yearly by 2020.

- Forestry protocols: Owners of timberland are becoming interested in programs that would reward them for managing their land in ways that reduce and sequester carbon dioxide. Companies and nonprofits, for instance, are interested in investing in "offsets" that will produce real, verifiable and permanent CO2 reductions.

To encourage this trend, the board should approve protocols by the California Climate Action Registry that will guide owners of timberland on how to manage their forests if they want to receive such credit. Purchases of bogus offsets is already a huge problem worldwide. These protocols will help encourage some integrity.