

Restore the Delta
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June 27, 2025

The Honorable Isaac G. Bryan
Chair, Assembly Natural Resources Committee
State Capitol
P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249-0055

RE: Support for SB 643 -- Carbon Dioxide Removal Purchase Program

Dear Chair Bryan:

Restore the Delta (RTD) is pleased to support SB 643, the Carbon Dioxide Removal Purchase Pilot Program bill. SB 643 directs the California Air Resources Board (CARB) to establish a competitive grant program for eligible carbon dioxide removal (CDR) projects to accelerate the state's progress toward its carbon neutrality goals. **California is not on track to meet its carbon neutrality and CDR goals.** This bill is an important step to help address this problem.

Restore the Delta is a nonprofit based in Stockton, California, dedicated to protecting the cultural, environmental, and economic vitality of the San Joaquin Delta region. Based in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta since 2006, our organization works in the areas of public education, program and policy development, and outreach so that all Californians recognize the Sacramento-San Joaquin Bay Delta as part of California's natural heritage, deserving of restoration. With over 75,000 followers, our programs span water quality monitoring, flood and land restoration, sustainable agriculture, youth engagement, and carbon and energy policy development.

Our Carbon and Energy Program evaluates emerging climate technology industries in the Delta region, with a focus on environmental and economic risks, public health implications, and community benefits. We collaborate with carbon removal and energy industries, government agencies, national labs, and community-based organizations to develop research and policy solutions grounded in environmental justice.

Climate change poses a severe threat to California and particularly to the Delta ecosystem. We have already seen climate disruptions including extreme heat, drought, rising sea levels, and changes in precipitation patterns that threaten Delta water quality, fish populations, and the agricultural communities we represent. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) declared that all strategies to stabilize the climate will inevitably include carbon dioxide removal (CDR). In 2022, AB 1279 established California's commitment to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045. Building upon this, CARB stated that "there is no path to carbon neutrality without carbon removal and sequestration" and established California's CDR targets in the 2022 Scoping Plan. **We are not even close to meeting these targets.**

Restore the Delta supports SB 643's establishment of a competitive grant program for carbon dioxide removal projects, which represents a thoughtful approach to advancing California's climate goals while maintaining important accountability measures. We particularly support the state procurement approach because currently much of CDR is procured through private entities, offering little opportunity for

community-level engagement in shaping project goals and outcomes. This state-led program has the potential to create more meaningful opportunities for community involvement compared to private CDR markets. The bill's grant-based approach provides better oversight than a simple credit purchase system through staggered payments and independent third-party verification requirements. The requirement for private sector matching funds helps ensure market viability while reducing public risk.

We appreciate the bill's focus on community benefits mechanisms and the requirement that projects be physically located within California. This framework creates opportunities for CDR projects to potentially address multiple local needs beyond carbon removal—such as flood protection, water quality improvements, and air quality benefits that could serve Delta communities. This approach aligns with RTD's commitment to ensuring that climate technologies advance both emissions reduction and community resilience. The bill includes important protections, including prohibitions on using CDR processes for enhanced oil recovery, restrictions on certain biomass feedstocks, and requirements that projects demonstrate additionality and permanently retire credits on behalf of the state.

While we support the bill's intent and structure, we note that important considerations around water quality impacts, aquatic ecosystem protections, and reliable measurement standards remain areas for ongoing attention as California's carbon removal programs develop. Given the Delta's ecological significance and the complex relationships between climate technologies and water resources, continued vigilance will be essential to ensure that carbon removal advances in ways that prioritize community engagement and protect California's vital natural resources while serving local needs.

For these reasons, we ask you to vote "aye" on SB 643.

Sincerely,



Esther Mburu
Carbon Policy Analyst
Restore the Delta

Cc: Assemblymember Juan Alanis, AD-22, Vice-Chair of the Assembly Natural Resources Committee
Assemblymember Damon Connolly, AD-12
Assemblymember Stan Ellis, AD-32
Assemblymember Heath Flora, AD-09
Assemblymember Robert Garcia, AD-50
Assemblymember Matt Haney, AD-17
Assemblymember Josh Hoover, AD-07
Assemblymember Ash Kalra, AD-25
Assemblymember Al Muratsuchi, AD-66
Assemblymember Gail Pellerin, AD-28
Assemblymember Nick Schultz, AD-44
Assemblymember Buffy Wicks, AD-14
Assemblymember Rick Chavez Zbur, AD-51
Senator Anna Caballero, SD-14