

Draft MTC/ABAG Cap and Trade Advocacy Principles

1. Support Long-Term Extension of Cap and Trade Program

The Cap and Trade program is one of California’s most effective tools for reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and meeting the state’s climate goals. By capping emissions and creating financial incentives for GHG reductions, the program drives long-term decarbonization while generating critical funding for climate friendly projects, including sustainable transportation and transit-oriented affordable housing. A long-term extension will provide the certainty needed to sustain emissions reductions, stabilize the market, ensure continued funding certainty for projects and programs that support a more sustainable and equitable future.

2. Sustained Investment in Transportation and Affordable Housing

Maintain at least the current 60 percent continuous appropriation for transportation and transit-accessible affordable housing. Given that transportation remains the largest contributor to GHG emissions in California, it is essential for our climate goals to sustain and expand clean transportation options, support high levels of transit ridership and increase availability of affordable housing located near transit.

3. Fair Share for the Bay Area

Any updates to the structure of the Cap and Trade program should maintain the Bay Area’s ability to compete effectively for funding and strengthen Bay Area competitiveness. If formula-based approaches are considered for existing or new programs, formulas must ensure the Bay Area continues to receive a fair share – consistent with historical allocations – so that it can continue to meet high levels of transit ridership demand, expand transit options, build more affordable housing near transit and implement Plan Bay Area, the region’s sustainable communities strategy (SCS).

4. Equitable Distribution of Resources

Advocate that policies intended to steer Cap and Trade funds into the state’s low-income and historically marginalized communities are inclusive of the Bay Area’s Equity Priority Communities, which reflect the region’s disproportionately high cost of housing.

5. Ensure Efficient and Effective Use of Cap-and-Trade Revenues

Cap and Trade revenues should be deployed efficiently to advance California's climate goals. Minimizing administrative burdens will ensure funds are put to work on high-impact projects that deliver real climate benefits. Retaining and expanding program flexibility will allow investments to be prioritized based on the highest needs, which may vary by region over time, ensuring the responsive and effective use of resources to meet the state's climate and resilience goals.

6. Increased Funding for Transit Operations

Advocate for formula-based funding from Cap and Trade to support sustaining service for existing transit riders and attracting new riders through SB 125's Zero-Emission Transit Capital Program model. This funding would serve as a complement and a potential backstop to a Bay Area regional transportation measure.

7. Assist with Implementation of Sustainable Communities Strategies

Sustain and enhance Cap and Trade resources as a tool to implement Plan Bay Area 2050 and other region's SCSes, California's framework for reducing greenhouse gas emissions from transportation by requiring the state's metro areas to plan for a future in which transit, walking and biking are convenient, affordable and reliable options. Accelerate GHG reduction by providing a formula-based, continuous allocation of Cap and Trade funds to regions for SCS implementation; funds could be used to advance each region's unique approach to meeting its SCS goals, be that investing in improvements to expand transit service, sustaining transit operations in high-ridership corridors, and/or advancing zero-emission transit fleet transitions.

8. Enhancing Resilience to Climate-Fueled Natural Hazards

Support investments in planning and projects that support the Bay Area and California in adapting to a changing climate, including, but not limited to, sea level rise, wildfires and heat. Prioritize funding to protect critical infrastructure and surrounding communities.