Richard Gienger
[redacted] Whitethorn
California 95589
[redacted]
8 January 2016

Russell Henly
Assistant Secretary of Forest Resources Management
California Natural Resources Agency
1416 Ninth Street Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814
AB1492Program.Comments@Resources.ca.gov

Comments from Richard Gienger, and on the Behalf of Forests Forever,
RE: 12.2.15 Pilots Concept Draft, 12.15.15 Public Workshop and Related Matters

Dear Russ:

The 12.2.15 Concept Paper draft was certainly a great improvement on the August 2015 draft. You all really listened to the comments on that draft and input at the October workshop. A lot of work was evident, ranging from incorporating the public at each step (especially as integral to the Pilot Project teams, or PPWorking Groups that you refer to), to the consideration and paring down of potential Planning Watersheds for the initial Pilot.

Major collective concerns remain for the selection of the initial pilot Planning Watershed and selection of the initial (and subsequent) Pilot Project Working Group(s). In the 12.2.15 draft you basically leave those decisions to yourself. At the 12.15.15 workshop you acknowledged that conferral would take place with the Natural Resources Agency, and seemed to concede that this conferral would include the other partner, CalEPA.

I know that everyone's trying to get the first pilot underway and this is good, but a more transparent set of selection procedures needs to be vetted. This mainly refers to the PPWG teams. The selection of the actual Planning Watershed has a lot more set criteria, although more focused discussion would be good. The main concern we have is that we have the best PPWG teams possible, with a clear and supportable process for selection and actual support for the various stakeholder representatives. It seems that it's a major hurdle before a team can be selected and start working on the initial pilot. It is possible to get a head start on the data/information collection as soon as the locale of the Planning Watershed is determined, so the PPWG can hit the 'ground running' – and the locale is likely to have influence in the composition of the particular PPWG team. Please draft a process for team selection and support and modify as various sensible recommendations are made – and then get that team together that has broad stakeholder support.

Another huge collective concern continues about the relationships and various conflicts between the Effectiveness Monitoring Committee (EMC), the TRFR Program, and beyond. The EMC is seeking new members and selection of projects, and is moving much faster than the TRFR Program, with much less public awareness and participation. It seems that adequate implementation of the intents of AB 1492 and the TRFR Program is a higher priority, and should be treated as such.

Respectfully,

Richard Gienger and on behalf of Forests Forever