



EMORY
UNIVERSITY

Office of Sustainability Initiatives

Ciannat M. Howett
Director

July 14, 2011

STARS Steering Committee
Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education
213 ½ North Limestone
Lexington, Kentucky 40507

Dear STARS representative:

Please consider this letter of affirmation as documentation that Emory University's local carbon offsets program in South Georgia meets the criteria necessary for an Innovation Credit in the AASHE STARS assessment. Innovation credits seek to recognize innovative practices, policies, or outcomes that are not covered by or exceed the highest criterion of an existing STARS credit, as well as those that are innovative for the institution's region. With these criteria in mind, I can validate that Emory University's local carbon offsets project meets these requirements.

Emory has partnered with the R. Howard Dobbs Foundation, Pacific Forest Trust, and the Jo Jones Center for Ecological Research on a local carbon offsets project in South Georgia. Emory has been the leader, with the vital support of Dobbs, in pulling this project together, which will apply California forestry offset standards to create the first credible offset project in the state of Georgia.

Due to a decline in the profitability of the timber industry and a multiple-decadal trend of urban expansion, Southeastern forests are under an increasing threat of fragmentation and conversion. This project focuses on protecting Longleaf Pine forests, which are native to the Southeast. The Longleaf Pine ecosystem is rich in biodiversity and provides both habitat and food for wildlife, including some endangered or threatened species. Over 98% of the original Longleaf forests in the Southeast have already been lost, which is not only disturbing due to its negative impact on wildlife habitat, water quality, and timber availability, but because the loss of these forests represents a large source of carbon dioxide emissions.

Forest loss is one the largest sources of greenhouse gas emissions worldwide, with over 4,000 acres of forests lost to development per day in the United States alone. The Southeast is one of the main regions contributing to this trend, with North Carolina and Georgia leading the nation in forest acres lost. Recognition of the value of Southeastern forests in carbon sequestration in regional climate policies is an important precursor to the participation of Southeastern landowners in the emerging market for carbon emissions reductions. If accomplished, this

Emory University
1599 Clifton Road
Atlanta, Georgia 30322

Tel 404.727.5020
Fax 404.727.5042
ciannat.howett@emory.edu

An equal opportunity, affirmative action university

STARS Steering Committee

Page 2

July 14, 2011

recognition would provide a strong incentive for Southeastern landowners to conserve their forests. We believe our collective experience and focus on private forests is highly relevant to these efforts in the Southeast, especially in light of the fact that over 90% of Southeastern forests are privately-owned.

I welcome the opportunity to discuss this innovative carbon offset program further. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ciannat M. Howett". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ciannat M. Howett

Director