

Mine Methane Capture

Comparison of California ARB Compliance Offset Project Protocol to Climate Action Reserve Voluntary Offset Project Protocol Version 1.1



The protocol adopted by the California Air Resources Board (ARB) for the creation of compliance offsets from mine methane capture (MMC) projects contains several changes from the Climate Action Reserve Coal Mine Methane Project Protocol Version 1.1, as well as expands eligibility to include two additional project types. This document is meant to highlight some of the important changes that appear in the compliance protocol.

Eligibility

- ⌘ The Reserve accepts only new projects with a start date no more than six months prior to submittal, while the ARB compliance program will accept new projects with start dates as early as January 1, 2007.
- ⌘ In addition to projects which destroy ventilation air methane (VAM) and methane from drainage activities at active underground mines, active surface mine drainage activities and abandoned underground mine methane recovery activities are eligible for crediting under the ARB compliance protocol.
- ⌘ Pipeline injection is an eligible destruction activity for active surface mine projects as well as abandoned underground mine projects under the ARB compliance protocol, provided the now abandoned underground mine did not inject mine methane into a natural gas pipeline while active. In the Reserve protocol and for active underground mine activities under the ARB compliance protocol, pipeline injection is not eligible for crediting.
- ⌘ If a non-qualifying device was destroying mine methane at any time during the year prior to project commencement, all methane from that well or borehole is not eligible for crediting under the ARB compliance protocol.

Project Quantification

- ⌘ The ARB compliance protocol provides guidance for quantifying baseline and project emissions and emission reductions for active underground mine VAM, active underground mine methane drainage, active surface mine drainage, and abandoned underground mine methane recovery activities. The Reserve protocol only provides guidance for calculating emissions and emission reductions from active underground mine VAM and drainage activities.
- ⌘ In the ARB compliance protocol, the U.S. EPA eGRID2012 values (for emission year 2009) are the only option for determining the emissions factor for grid-connected electricity usage (Table A.2), whereas the Reserve instructs projects using the voluntary protocol to use the eGRID factor that most closely aligns with the year in which the emission reductions occurred.
- ⌘ The ARB compliance protocol allows the use of site-specific source test data in lieu of the default destruction efficiency values if the source test plan is approved by the Executive Officer. Instructions on how to submit a source test plan for approval are provided in ARB's MMC FAQ number 3.c. The Reserve protocol allows site-specific source test results only from a state or local agency accredited service provider.

Project Monitoring

- ⌘ Requirements for meter placement, QA/QC, and measurement frequency are very similar, but notable differences exist. For example, active underground drainage projects must measure continuously and record data every 15 minutes under MMC. Totalizing daily, an alternative allowed under the Reserve's protocol, is not permitted. Further, the Reserve protocol allows for calibration accuracy testing to occur 2 months before or after the reporting period, while ARB's specifies up to 2 months before or 1 day after the reporting period ends. Please refer to the MMC protocol for specific monitoring requirements.

