

Brief comments about the response to the first reviews
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Response 5.4: "...NEE uncertainty *can be influenced by the number of towers* for a given project area (Kessomkiat *et al.*, 2013),..."

14. Please help me to see how the remuneration plan works on years, possibly long stretches of time during which a measured forest loses carbon over time. It appears that C uptake at Harvard Forest can be quite variable. Last year, coauthor Munger *et al.* (2018) noted:

At Harvard Forest: "Annual NEE ranges from -0.4 to -6.1 Mg-C ha⁻¹y⁻¹ (always carbon uptake), with a mean of -2.9 (±1.5) Mg-C ha⁻¹ y⁻¹. Here we focus on the highest and lowest carbon uptake years, 2008 and 2010, respectively in order to examine how forest carbon balance can shift so dramatically over a 2 year interval."

If the system were implemented, would the landowner have to pay someone back if the forest is a net carbon emitter?

14.1 The actual terms of an agreement and contract governing the responsibilities for each party, and compensation and remedies for non-compliance, will be specific to each project and would generally follow established contract law and are beyond the scope of the paper. However, we have added background information for this component including how years of positive emissions would be treated by the contract.

15. What happens in the case of a wildfire? (Actually, one could follow the other should there be a prolonged drought.) Please try to address these issues.

15.1 In the case of wildfire, or *force majeure*, just as in current carbon credit programs, project accounting is suspended with no consequences for contract holders. However, the ultimate cause of wildfires could be litigated in the legal system affecting compensation for carbon lost to the atmosphere. As a business matter, legal outcomes cannot be predicted and are often covered by insurance programs.

These replies do not sound like what one would like to hear from a proponent of a 'game-changer'. They sound like someone talking very fast after consulting with a lawyer. This will doubtless be noted by your critics. One ought not to equivocate sometimes, heartily advocate at others. An open explanation of your argument is probably strong enough to carry the argument without dodging the issue. Thank you for at least mentioned this background in the revision.