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SB 375 and the I-5 North Coast Corridor Project

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I administer the climate laws you've been hearing about today – AB 32 and SB 375, the state's Global Warming Solutions Act and the related Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act.

I am here to briefly explain these laws and the Air Board's measures to implement them – in the hope of clarifying public discussion on the Interstate 5 North Coast Corridor Project.

Very briefly, AB 32 requires the state to rollback GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020.

SB 375 is a powerful complement to the Air Board's suite of policy measures aimed at achieving the AB 32 goal. It is part of a three-pronged approach to reducing GHGs from passenger vehicles – cars, pickups, SUVs and minivans – which are the single largest source of climate-altering emissions in California.

One measure limits GHG emissions from new passenger vehicles while another limits the carbon content in gasoline and other vehicle fuels.

SB 375 will reduce per capita emissions from driving – over and above the controls on vehicles and fuels – through improved transportation and land use planning – improvements that will make it easier for residents to spend less time driving.

As Mr. Gallegos explained, SANDAG is required under SB 375 to account for GHG emissions associated with the North Coast Corridor Project.

And the law requires ARB to set limits on the amount of GHG emissions for 2020 and 2035. We call those limits "targets." The board set those targets in September for western San Diego County and the state's 17 other metropolitan regions.

I want to clarify the role of SB 375 and AB 32 when it comes to local decision making on any particular project, such as the proposed I-5 expansion. Perhaps the most effective way to do that is to spell out what SB 375 doesn't do:

- First, SB 375 doesn't override CEQA. State and local agencies must still identify the significant environmental impacts of their actions and avoid or mitigate those impacts.
- Neither SB 375 nor AB 32 gives any state agency the ability to make decisions about individual projects within a region.

- Those decisions remain in the hands of city councils and county boards of supervisors.
- Consistency with SB 375 is not determined project-by-project. Rather, individual proposed developments are viewed in the context of the regional strategy for reducing GHG emissions.
- The reduction targets set for the San Diego region are based on growth scenarios that include the proposed I-5 expansion.
- In its resolution approving the SB 375 targets, the Air Board expressly said that these goals are meant to guide regional planning and "not to judge the environmental impact of any particular project" or "imply a greenhouse gas reduction target or goal for any particular project."

The Air Board's job under SB 375 is to limit GHG emissions – not growth.

The issue isn't whether the San Diego region will grow – you will. The issue is how. How do we accommodate population growth and cultivate economic growth in the most energy efficient way possible.

When you put the growth question this way, it reframes the planning process from the traditional project-by-project

strategy to a more holistic approach. You introduce into community and regional planning such considerations as:

- The region's housing-jobs balance
- Commuting times between work and home.
- Proximity of developments to mass transit.
- Availability of energy-efficient transportation alternatives to the single occupancy passenger vehicle.

You widen people's choice of living and transportation arrangements by:

- Making mass transit more convenient efficient and economical.
- Putting homes and employment centers within closer range to shorten commutes.
- Designing streets and housing tracts that make it easier and more pleasant for people to walk or bike to schools and shopping centers.

In short, you design more livable, healthier communities. And in doing so, you reduce global warming emissions.

Process:

- The new state law requires these regional agencies to adopt a plan called the Sustainable Communities

Strategies – a package of policies and measures – for meeting the reduction targets.

- The sustainability plan will be a new element added to the federal Regional Transportation Plans that regional planning agencies already prepare to secure federal highway and transit money.
- The strategies will link land use, housing and transportation together for the first time.
- Developing them will require an unprecedented level of collaboration between the local, regional and state governments.
- The development of a region's sustainability plan will occur in an open, public process that will gather and fold community values into the plan for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- The law encourages, but does not require cities and counties to approve the regional sustainability plan and incorporate the strategies in their day-to-day land use decisions.
- Locals can opt out.

Now the ARB doesn't just set the limits and disappear. Once SCS is adopted we do a credibility check – a high-tech

tire kick if you will. Our engineers will crunch the numbers to see if the proposed measures will likely achieve the promised emission reductions in time to meet the 2020 and 2035 targets.

If the plan doesn't pass muster, the regional agency can make adjustments. And we'll revisit each region's target every four years to ensure they are achievable.

This process is similar to the one used for decades in meeting the federal air quality standards for conventional pollutions, such as smog-forming and diesel soot.

The federal EPA requires local air pollution control districts to develop strategies called State Implementation Plans, or SIPs, for bringing their areas into attainment with the standards. Once the districts adopt those plans, we review them to see that they'll do as promised, before we forward them to the EPA for final approval.

As for SB 375, communities that adopt the sustainability strategies will have more to boast about than the greenhouse gas reductions. Improvements that lessen the need to drive come loaded with co-benefits:

- Less time in the car means more time with family and friends.
- Less fuel means more money to go to the beach or a Padres game.

- Perhaps the greatest co-benefit of SB 375 is improved public health.

Pursuing transportation and land-use policies that reduce greenhouse gases also makes for cleaner air. The bulk of these emissions come from combustion of gasoline and other fossil fuels, which also emit smog-forming compounds and harmful exhaust particles. So the measures we take to control the one type of pollutant works for both.

Highway expansion projects need to be individually scrutinized for their many environmental impacts, whether its air quality, decibel levels or aesthetics. And for that we have CEQA. These long-term, major transportation projects also weigh into the accounting of environmental impacts that are of regional and, ultimately, global scope. And for that we have SB 375. Thank you.