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California Air Resources Board Chairman
“Californians in Copenhagen: Posturing versus Progress”
UC Davis School of Law
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I'd first like to acknowledge something special about UC Davis that some of you may not realize. Many universities in the country now place a special emphasis on environmental studies and research, as Davis has for decades. Some faculty members and programs in the environment elsewhere may exceed those here in notoriety, research grants or volume of scholarly publications. But I'm hard pressed to name another university that can match UC Davis in overall contributions to environmental policy. I'm struck by the breadth of contributions from so many different fields -- public health, medicine, engineering, energy, economics, natural resources, design and planning and, of course, the law.

The Air Resources Board is certainly a huge beneficiary of UCD's research and expertise. For example, your Institute of Transportation Studies is the world's leading academic research program in clean vehicle fuels, technologies and policy. California is fortunate to have its founding director, Professor Dan Sperling, serving on the Air Board. And I was fortunate to have its associate research director, Anthony Eggert, as my science and technology policy advisor for the past two years. Gov. Schwarzenegger just appointed Anthony to the state Energy Commission, one of our partner agencies in mitigating climate change.

I sometimes hesitate to say “climate change” or “global warming” in public because, to some, they are fighting words. This was the case last December when representatives from 194 countries gathered for the international climate change summit in Copenhagen. The conference was largely an exercise in political posturing. Calls for concrete greenhouse gas reductions took second place to concerns over the competitive advantage that emerging economies could have in the absence of legally binding targets.

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India's Environment Minister Jairam Ramesh recently told the Wall Street Journal that international negotiations on climate change are a "complete quagmire," and I can't say I disagree. Mr. Ramesh said, "We have a Kyoto Protocol in which the U.S. has not ratified. The Europeans are not going to be taking on commitments unless the Americans take it on. The Americans are saying we won't take something on until the Chinese take something on. So we are, frankly, headed nowhere."

In the end, the Copenhagen talks failed to produce an international climate change treaty with specific targets or any framework for a global carbon market. Instead, we got a non-binding Copenhagen Accord – a list of national pledges to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to levels yet to be determined. While the Accord sets up a fund to help poor countries most harmed by climate change, there's no indication where the money will come from or where it will be directed.

For many participants, the climate negotiation process that nations have relied on for almost two decades broke down in Copenhagen.

Yet all was not lost in Copenhagen.

The "top-down" style of targets and timetables under the Kyoto Protocol may have met its end. But what appears to be emerging in its place is a "bottom-up," "how-to" approach.

While various countries were squabbling over "obligation" and "burden" in abating climate change, the California delegation and leaders of other "sub-national" governments frustrated with the negotiation process presented world leaders a "how-to" manual for achieving real greenhouse gas reduction.

The California delegation led by Gov. Schwarzenegger and Cal/EPA Secretary Linda Adams – with two prominent legislators and leaders of California NGOs, local government and business in tow – went to Copenhagen to advocate a climate policy that respects the rights of "sub-nationals" – cities, states and provinces – to develop the solutions that work best for them. A key element in the success of implementing any climate change program must fully incorporate sub-national governments as active participants in building their clean-energy future.

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As a first step, Gov. Schwarzenegger announced in Copenhagen a new coalition of subnationals to combat climate change. Members of The Club of 20 Regions, or R20, will work together to accelerate the transition to a low carbon economy and better prepare for the unavoidable impacts of climate change.

What's needed, we said, are demonstration projects, training programs and modeling software that respectfully show, rather than tell, regions around the world how to:

- Measure greenhouse gas emissions
- Cost effectively reduce those emissions
- Verify progress
- Kick start clean technologies using their own public money
- And how to compete in a global carbon market

California has no shortage of know-how to share with the world, beginning with its No. 1 success story – energy efficiency.

As you know, California homes are loaded with personal computers, widescreen TVs, iPods, PlayStations, air conditioners, hot tubs and swimming pool pumps. Despite that, residents today use about the same amount of electricity as they did 30 years ago. Though electricity demand nationwide has risen sharply in recent years, California's per capita electricity use has remained relatively flat since 1973 – the lowest in the nation -- thanks to the state's strict energy-efficiency standards for buildings and appliances.

Those standards have saved Californians over \$56 billion since the 1970s – the equivalent of \$1000 per household.

These gains are known as the "Rosenfeld Effect," after Arthur Rosenfeld who led the energy conservation movement in the '70s after the Middle Eastern oil embargo – and never let go. Just one week ago, we honored Professor Rosenfeld at the Mondavi Center following a symposium named in his honor on the next generation of energy efficiency. He has dedicated his life to making homes, commercial buildings and appliances — lighting, refrigerators and televisions — more energy efficient.

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California's cornerstone climate change law, known as Assembly Bill 32, was built on the lessons learned from 30 years of energy policies. And the fuel-efficiency measures that the Air Board has adopted or proposed to implement under this 2006 law guarantees that Californians will continue to save money. These measures include:

- ✓ A low-carbon fuels standard for the cars we drive.
- ✓ Renewable energy standards for power generation.
- ✓ And the Pavley clean-car standards.

The Pavley standards – named after the now Senator Fran Pavley who authored the legislation in 2002 – is another success story that California can take on the road. It's the first measure in the country to require automakers to curb greenhouse gas emissions from cars and passenger trucks. The Pavley-standard vehicles will look and drive pretty much the same as other modern cars; only the owners will gain a net fuel savings of at least \$3,000 over the car's life.

Our list of tools and strategies for mitigating climate change goes on.

- The Air Board has developed a unique way of calculating greenhouse gas emission reductions that takes into account regional differences, such as landfill practices.
- We have a network of greenhouse gas monitors mounted on towers around the state to measure our progress and to detect sources we have under estimated or never quantified.
- Our ability to forecast regional impacts of climate change improves by the year. The predictions are critical to flood control, our drinking water supply from the Sierra and the success of wine industry and other farming enterprises.
- California also is urging other regions to take strong, immediate actions that can return early emissions reductions -- such as the regulation of highly potent greenhouse gases that were left out of the Kyoto Protocol.

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- By quickly arresting soot, methane and the ozone-depleting substances, the scientists tell us, the world can delay climate change by perhaps as much as 40 years — buying us time to significantly trim emissions of carbon dioxide.
- The ultra-fine particles of black carbon are an ideal target for achieving quick mitigation because – unlike carbon dioxide, it remains in the atmosphere just a few weeks, rather than a few centuries. Expanding the use of diesel particulate filters on vehicles and clean-burning cook stoves to replace those burning dung and wood can reduce it. And thousands of lives would be saved in developing countries by switching from coal-burning cook stoves to ones burning biofuels.

There is significant work that needs to be done on the road to the next international climate summit, at the end of this year in Mexico City.

If we are to have any hope of achieving our long-term climate goals, California must continue to engage with the world in developing and deploying low-carbon and clean energy solutions.

Global problems require global approaches – and global citizenship.