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Sierra Club California Statement on Governor Brown's 2013 State-of-the-State Address

SACRAMENTO—Today Governor Brown presented his 2013 State-of-the-State Address, during which he commented on three issues directly addressing the environment: Delta water conveyance, California's efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and climate disruption, and transportation's alignment with environmental needs.

Sierra Club California Director Kathryn Phillips released the following statement in response to the Governor's speech:

"First, we are pleased to join the governor in congratulating the legislature and voters for passing Proposition 30, which helped bring us to the healthiest budget in a decade. Sierra Club California supported Proposition 30. The governor deserves high praise for his leadership in introducing and pushing that measure through, so thank you, Governor Brown.

"We also appreciate the governor's continued leadership on addressing climate change and moving ahead to meet the state's greenhouse gas pollution goals. Californians are united in wanting to take a lead on reducing that pollution, and we are all benefiting from the shift to cleaner energy for our electricity and our transportation.

"We strongly disagree with the governor's approach to the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta. Giant tunnels or a peripheral canal are both out of order and won't solve the water problems we face. Creating infrastructure that will literally suck the life out of a vast ecosystem on which the fishing industry, regional tourism, local farms and California's complex natural environment are all dependent is an outdated idea that needs to be deep-sixed.

"A more rational approach makes more sense for the economies of Northern and Southern California, for the environment, and for the people who will need water if and when a massive earthquake strikes. That includes helping plug the leaks in the aging water delivery infrastructure in California's cities and towns; focusing on water conservation and reuse more intensely all over the state, including in the industrial and commercial sectors; fixing the crumbling levy system; and generally reducing Californians' dependence on hundreds and hundreds of miles of quake-vulnerable aqueducts.

"Californians have shown time and again their willingness to change and innovate to improve their lives and protect the environment. The governor has proven more than once that he is an innovative thinker. That's why the notion of addressing our water challenges with an outmoded big building project that won't deliver a better economy, better environment or more

reliable water delivery, is so perplexing. It isn't innovative, it won't protect the environment, and it won't solve the problem.

“We are encouraged that the governor has asked the Transportation Agency to review how transportation planning and funding align, including his acknowledgement that Californians have a different perspective on transportation and the environment today than we did in the past, when his father was building highways. We hope the agency remembers that addressing the need to clean up our highly polluting goods movement system must be part of any review. It would also be good for that agency to bring a broad range of stakeholders to the table, including representatives of communities that have suffered the most from the old ways of doing transportation planning.”

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Sierra Club California is the legislative and regulatory advocacy arm of the Sierra Club's 13 chapters and more than 150,000 members in California.