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Statement from Kim Delfino, California Program Director for Defenders of Wildlife, on the signing of landmark land use law (SB 375)

“Defenders of Wildlife was pleased to see Governor Schwarzenegger sign SB 375 into law last night. The governor’s decision to make this bill law demonstrates California’s continued leadership on the effort to reduce global warming emissions. We also applaud the efforts of Senator Darrell Steinberg and the bill sponsors to bring a new vision for smart growth in California – one that supports California’s efforts to address global warming.

“SB 375 promotes policies to reduce global warming and air pollution, provides more housing choices and shorter commutes, and reduces fossil fuel consumption. This bill also provides an opportunity for regions to consider and reduce impacts of growth on farmland and sensitive wildlife habitat.

“Global warming is one of the most serious threats to wildlife today. The projected rise in temperatures will have devastating impacts on California wildlife and natural systems. Already wildlife like the pika, desert tortoise, Central Valley chinook and tricolored blackbirds are feeling the heat.

“SB 375 is a key part of California’s effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, with household transportation generating about 30 percent of the state’s emissions. This bill will provide incentives for local and regional governments to achieve reductions in emissions through the improved siting and design of growth in the region.

“While Defenders would have liked to have seen a stronger provision in this bill related to the protection of farmland and important habitat areas, we look forward to working with Sen. Steinberg and the Governor to provide funds and information to local governments to identify these areas so that we can plan smarter development for the future.”

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Defenders of Wildlife is dedicated to the protection of all native animals and plants in their natural communities. With more than 1 million members and activists, Defenders of Wildlife is a leading advocate for innovative solutions to safeguard our wildlife heritage for generations to come. For more information, visit www.defenders.org.