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August 6, 2008

The Honorable Darrell Steinberg
Member, California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 4035
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: SB 375 (Steinberg) – Transportation Planning: Greenhouse Gas Emissions
As proposed to be amended – SUPPORT**

Dear Senator Steinberg:

The California State Association of Counties (CSAC) is pleased to offer our support for your SB 375, as proposed to be amended, a comprehensive measure to address greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from the transportation sector. First, CSAC would especially like to thank you, your staff, and the sponsors of the measure for continuing to work with us over the past months to address our concerns. The countless meetings and negotiations have paid off; as all of our requested amendments have been met and CSAC is now in full support of the measure.

The measure, as proposed to be amended, is less prescriptive with respect to the regional planning process as formerly proposed by the bill. It contains significant and robust processes for local government and public input into the entire process from the California Air Resources Board (CARB) setting the targets, to the Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) developing the plans to achieve them. The bill also contains meaningful CEQA reform for specified infill and mixed use projects and successfully aligns the long range transportation planning process with the housing element process.

As you are aware, CSAC adopted a climate change policy in November of 2007, which acknowledges the need to address the targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) from the transportation sector through regional approaches. We also support regional blueprint and transportation planning as a means of achieving more efficient growth and effective infrastructure investments in California. Our policy supports these regional approaches over a one-size-fits all statewide approach. We find that your bill is consistent with our policy direction and provides sufficient flexibility to allow these very successful regional approaches to continue.

We greatly appreciate the amendments to SB 375 which recognize the need to rely upon member cities and counties within the regions to develop the sustainable communities strategies within the context of long-range transportation plans to strive towards accomplishing the voluntary regional GHG targets.

Thank you for your leadership on the important issue of addressing climate change through existing—yet enhanced—regional approaches. Please do not hesitate to contact me at your convenience at 916.650.8104 or dbaker@counties.org regarding any questions you may have with our position.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "DeAnn Baker".

DeAnn Baker
Legislative Representative

cc: The Honorable Mark Leno, Chair, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Members and Consultants, Assembly Appropriations Committee
William Weber, Assembly Republican Caucus
Gregson Porteous, Assembly Republican Caucus
Peter Ackeret, Governor's Office of Planning and Research
Josh Rosa, Governor's Office of Planning and Research