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***Broad Coalition Urges Governor Schwarzenegger and the California State Legislature to Use the Stimulus Highway Funds to Repair Crumbling Infrastructure which will create more jobs, improve safety, and benefit the environment***

Following on the heels of the imminent passage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) environmental, transit, labor, pedestrian, cyclist, and other public interest groups throughout California are calling on the Governor and the state legislature to ensure that stimulus funds for transportation infrastructure are spent quickly and wisely, on projects that are economically and environmentally sustainable. Doing so will allow California to create jobs and rebuild our economy in short term, while improving safety moving the state in a direction of energy independence.

“Repairing our deteriorating roads and bridges creates more jobs than road expansion projects and cuts our dependence on oil,” stated Erin Steva, CALPIRG’s Transportation Associate. “These sorely needed projects are ready to go quickly and will create the kinds of jobs California needs to meet its long-term needs.”

“In addition to job creation, rehabilitation of existing roads and bridges provides an opportunity to create complete streets which improve safety for motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, the disabled and transit users,” said Deb Hubsmith, Director of the Safe Routes to School National Partnership. “California should set and enforce guidelines for spending stimulus money wisely, in a manner that prioritizes both our economic and environmental sustainability.”

A sign-on letter sent today to the Governor and the leadership of the State Legislature (see attached) includes recommendations for the following parameters in state legislation:

- Use highway funding for the rehabilitation and maintenance of existing roads and bridges
- Don’t use the stimulus funds for Prop 1B highway projects
- Build complete streets to accommodate all transportation users
- Prioritize public transit spending
- Create accountability processes for the state’s spending

The California Transportation Commission’s 2008 Annual Report notes that current revenues available for the rehabilitation of the state highway system are able to fund only about 40 percent of identified needs. In addition, according to the most recent National Bridge Inventory, California has 3,140 structurally deficient bridges that we cannot afford to wait to repair. We call on the California Legislature to ensure that our state takes a step forward to improve safety, jobs and the environment by prioritizing road and bridge infrastructure maintenance.