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The California Department of Housing and Community Development Commends the Adoption of Nation's First Green Building Code

Sacramento – The Department of Housing and Community Development's (HCD) and its Codes and Standards Division lauds the California Building Standards Commission's (CBSC) adoption of the nation's first statewide "green" building code. The code will take effect on January 1, 2011.

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger also praised the development, saying, "With this first-in-the nation mandatory green building standards code, California continues to pave the way in energy efficiency and environmental protection." The Governor's full statement can be found at <http://www.gov.ca.gov/press-release/14186/>.

"The new green building standards code will improve public health, safety and welfare by enhancing the design and construction of buildings throughout the state," said Director Lynn L. Jacobs. "The Administration recognizes the importance of statewide building standards that ensure sustainability by reducing water use, improving air quality, conserving energy and mitigating the effects of global climate change."

The code was originally adopted in July 2008; just one year after Governor Schwarzenegger directed state agencies to develop green building standards as a mandatory part of the building code by 2010. The voluntary code became effective in August 2009, leaving mandatory use of the code – or parts of it – up to local jurisdictions.

HCD developed the residential green building standards in collaboration with the CBSC, stakeholder groups and other state agencies. Staff reviewed existing green building standards, best practices, guidelines and other published materials to develop a code for new low-rise residential construction.

The new standards include:

- Indoor air standards which will limit volatile organic compounds, formaldehyde, limit moisture and improve air quality;
- A 20 percent reduction in indoor water use;

- A 50 percent reduction in construction waste;
- Occupant recycling, maintenance and operation information; and
- A comprehensive appendix which contains measures local government may use to go beyond the mandatory code minimum in a uniform statewide manner.

“Once again, California is leading the way towards a more sustainable future. This new code provides cost-effective building standards that will be beneficial to every home throughout the state,” Director Jacobs said.

HCD provides leadership, policies and programs to preserve and expand safe and affordable housing opportunities and promote strong communities for all Californians. The Department also supports increasing the supply of housing, especially affordable housing and works to improve the state’s housing conditions and the health and safety of its residents. As the lead housing department, HCD is part of the state Business, Transportation and Housing Agency.

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