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Contact: Tamie McGowen, Caltrans (916) 657-5060; Chris Cochran, Office of Traffic Safety (916) 509-3063; Fran Clader, CHP (916) 843-3310

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CALIFORNIA CALLS FOR DRIVERS TO “BE WORK ZONE ALERT” ON STATE HIGHWAYS

Children of highway workers remind drivers to stay alert and keep our workers safe



SACRAMENTO – Following the success of California’s “Slow for the Cone Zone” public awareness campaign, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS), and California Highway Patrol (CHP) today began asking drivers to “Be Work Zone Alert” and help save lives on California’s roads.

“Caltrans workers toil along California roadways with vehicles flying by just feet—or inches away,” said California State Transportation Agency Secretary Brian Kelly. “This public awareness campaign reminds us all that highway workers have families and loved ones who are counting on motorists to ‘Be Work Zone Alert’ and help save lives.”

The new “Be Work Zone Alert” campaign features public service announcements and nearly 60 billboards across California where the children of highway workers remind drivers to stay alert in California work zones. The campaign is funded with highway maintenance funds and a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

“Work zone collisions saddle our state with millions of dollars in unnecessary costs, not to mention the tragic—and preventable—loss of life,” said Caltrans Director Malcolm Dougherty. “The children of our workers are proud of their parents and are asking all drivers to help keep workers safe by staying alert in highway work zones.”

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California law requires all drivers to move over if safe to do so, or slow down when they see amber flashing lights on Caltrans vehicles.

Highway construction is one of the most dangerous occupations in the United States. Since the 1920s, 183 Caltrans employees have been killed on the job—and the risk of death is seven times higher for highway workers than for average workers in any other industries, according to the latest data from the California Department of Industrial Relations. On average 1,000 Caltrans vehicles are struck each year—more than three each day.

“All it takes is a split second of inattention to destroy the lives of so many people,” said CHP Commissioner Joe Farrow. “The CHP hopes this educational campaign will help raise awareness and prevent these completely preventable tragedies from occurring.”



Past public awareness campaigns, such as “Click It or Ticket” and “Slow for the Cone Zone” have helped improve public safety, reducing collisions, injuries and fatalities on California’s highways. In 2010, highway work zone injuries were reduced by 33 percent over 2007 levels. Nevertheless, work zone collisions still burdened the state with approximately \$185 million in economic cost as well as the tragic loss of human life.

“Using extra caution in construction zones will not only be safer for highway workers, it will also help ensure drivers and passengers make it home safely,” said Office of Traffic Safety Director Rhonda L. Craft. “Driving involves split second decisions. We all need to be alert.”

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