Statement of Carl Pope, Sierra Club Executive Director

"The world's nations have come together and concluded a historic--if incomplete--agreement to begin tackling global warming. Tonight's announcement is but a first step and much work remains to be done in the days and months ahead in order to seal a final international climate deal that is fair, binding, and ambitious. It is imperative that negotiations resume as soon as possible.

"President Obama and the rest of the world paid a steep price here in Copenhagen because of obstructionism in the United States Senate. That a deal was reached at all is testament to President Obama's leadership--all the more remarkable because of the very weak hand he was dealt because of the Senate's failure to pass domestic clean energy and climate legislation. Now that the rest of the world--including countries like China and India--has made clear that it is willing to take action, the Senate must pass domestic legislation as soon as possible. America and the world can no longer be held hostage to petty politics and obstructionism.

"What was clear over the past two weeks is that there is no argument over the science of global warming or the urgency with which we must act. A parade of developed and developing counties alike made crystal clear that they would implement their national plans to tackle global warming and building the clean energy economy not because they were required to do so, but because it was simply in their own national interest to do so.

"The agreement reached here has all the ingredients necessary to construct a final treaty--a mitigation target of 2 degrees Celsius, nationally appropriate action plans, a mechanism for international climate finance, and transparency with regard to national commitments. President Obama has made much progress in past 11 months and it now appears that the U.S.--and the world--is ready to do the hard work necessary to finish what was started here in Copenhagen.

"A chilly two weeks in Copenhagen has given humanity its best chance of preventing the ravages of a warming world. Today's deal is neither perfect nor complete, but we must not this chance slip away."