



# Executive Director's Watch

CALIFORNIA  
*Counties*

January 4, 2011

## Rethinking Government: It Begins Today

It's been quite a day at the CSAC office. This morning, on his first full day in office, Governor Jerry Brown met with CSAC officers and began discussions of a complex, far-reaching restructuring of the governance, financing, and delivery of public services in California. His visit to our offices, for a meeting that lasted more than an hour, was unprecedented and delivered a strong signal that he wants to work with CSAC to craft workable solutions.

As expressed in his inaugural speech yesterday, the Governor seems acutely aware that the state of California simply cannot continue business as usual. To extricate our state from its persistent and crippling budget crisis, we must be willing to revisit the fundamentals of government - its service priorities, structure, and financing. Governor Brown expressed to CSAC leadership a clear commitment to working shoulder to shoulder with counties as his Administration launches a spending plan next week that will propose a massive multi-year restructuring, which contemplates sending new responsibilities - and funding - to county governments.

Perhaps most striking about the Governor's perspective was his acknowledgement of - if not downright appreciation for - the diversity of priorities and preferences of our state's citizens. Clearly reflecting his service as Mayor of the City of Oakland, his notion of restructuring would provide the flexibility to local governments to set its priorities to meet community needs. In a move away from standardization and centralization within state-run bureaucracies, the Governor's plan is founded on the principle that government is best run when authority and responsibility reside at the level of closest to the people.

Along with the Governor, Director of Finance Ana Matosantos and Diane Cummins, who has been retained by the Governor to help craft a state-local restructuring plan, joined in the meeting. Ms. Cummins, prior to her retirement in 2009, served as the top fiscal advisor to Senate President pro Tems Don Perata and John Burton and previously worked as Chief Deputy Director at the Department of Finance.

More details on the specifics of the restructuring proposal are expected in the coming days. You have my commitment and the commitment of CSAC's officers – Supervisors Tavaglione, McGowan, and Finigan, all of whom were present at today's historic meeting – that CSAC will keep our members engaged in and informed about what may eventually be the most significant governmental reform any of us has ever witnessed.

Photos of the pre and post media interviews with the Governor and CSAC Officers will be posted on our blog, [The County Voice](#).