



January 28, 2019

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The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
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Dear Governor Newsom,

As you know from your long experience in both local and state government, counties in California have a unique role. We are half local and half state, answering to both the residents of the communities we live in and state policymakers and oversight agencies whose programs we provide.

State and county budgets in California are so intertwined with each other that continuing the close collaboration and partnership CSAC has had with the Administration for the past several years is the only way California can reach its full potential.

We want to thank you for your recognition of this fact, as shown in your proposed 2019-20 budget. It recognizes our partnership and addresses many of our shared priorities, while striking a balance between fiscal restraint and investment in programs that will make California better.

Counties especially appreciate your proposals that restore balance to state and county funding levels for In-Home Supportive Services, build on recent historic investments for housing and homelessness programs, and provide resources for disaster response, recovery, and prevention.

In-Home Supportive Services. The IHSS program manages to both improve the lives of the people it serves and reduce care costs by giving seniors and disabled individuals the help they need to stay in their homes and out of expensive care facilities. By increasing the state's General Fund commitment to IHSS, your proposal will create a structure for counties to manage IHSS costs and effectively deliver critically needed behavioral health and public health programs on behalf of the state. Counties are truly grateful to you and your Administration for working with us to restore balance and identify a more sustainable solution for IHSS funding.

Housing and Homelessness. The \$1.25 billion your budget proposes spending to jump start housing production and site emergency shelters and navigation centers is also welcome. In most counties, despite a near-record economic recovery, general revenues have still not returned to pre-recession levels, in real terms. With so many counties running just to stand still, it's difficult to make meaningful progress toward important goals like permanently reducing homelessness and improving planning, zoning, and permitting processes. The best use of one-time revenue is to improve lives and at the same time make changes that will reduce long-term costs. These proposals

do just that. We look forward to participating in any conversation about what local governments can do to encourage sufficient housing for people of all income levels.

Disaster Recovery and Local Assistance. Perhaps no issue better highlights the need for the state and counties to partner than the disasters that have caused so much destruction and suffering. We appreciate the proposal to backfill tax losses for fire-ravaged counties and the waiver of the local share for debris removal costs. Other proposals for firefighting equipment, public safety radios, mutual aid, and 9-1-1 fees should also help limit the effects of future disasters. We also appreciate the investment in forest health and resiliency. Better forest management will help protect our communities and watersheds and create safer, more resilient communities.

In closing, we wish to extend our sincere thanks not only for the current January proposal but also for the willingness to work with CSAC that you and your Administration have already shown. Like the state, counties are here to serve all Californians with critically needed services and practical idealism.

Respectfully,



Graham Knaus
Executive Director