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***A research and advocacy association, supporting efficient, responsive county government in Arizona.***



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## CSA 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Legislative Summit

Thank you, Maricopa County, for hosting an outstanding 13<sup>th</sup> Annual CSA Legislative Summit!

Your leadership and hospitality created an excellent forum for county officials from across the state to exchange ideas, build relationships and forge a focused coalition agenda for the next state legislative session.



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## County Supervisors Welcome Governor Doug Ducey!



The County Supervisors Association was honored to welcome Arizona Governor Doug Ducey to deliver the keynote address at the Summit luncheon on Wednesday, October 25.

During his remarks, Governor Ducey discussed the importance of a strong partnership between the state and the counties to provide efficient, responsive constituent services. He spoke of the positive economic opportunities occurring across Arizona and of the shared commitment among state and county elected officials to continually

look for opportunities to support business development and job creation.

Governor Ducey also highlighted the important work of major initiatives of his Administration, including rural-area broadband deployment, the Governor's Water Solutions Stakeholder effort and the Arizona Management System initiative, a major process-improvement effort that is driving efficiency and improving customer services across state government.

Thank you, Governor Ducey, for visiting with Arizona's County Supervisors!



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## CSA Board Adopts Budget Priorities and Legislative Proposals



This week Maricopa County hosted the Thirteenth Annual CSA Legislative Summit at the Talking Stick Conference Center in Scottsdale, Arizona. At the event, county supervisors, representing all 15 Arizona counties, established CSA's policy agenda for the 2018 state legislative session.

"It was truly an honor to hold this year's Legislative Summit in Maricopa County," said CSA President and Gila County Supervisor Tommie Cline Martin. "Our work sessions were very productive and produced some meaningful legislative policy items that we believe will save taxpayer dollars and increase investment in our local roads and highways. CSA stands ready to roll up our sleeves and get to work at the Capitol in 2018."

At the Summit, Arizona county supervisors unanimously agreed to call on state law-makers to eliminate mandates for counties to fund state agencies and to restore the state responsibility to fund 50% of the Superior Court judges salaries in Maricopa County, as is done in other counties. The agencies are the Arizona State Hospital, the Department of Juvenile Corrections and the Department of Revenue.

These recession-era policies have badly misaligned oversight and funding responsibilities between the state and county governments—effectively causing "backdoor" taxation, as counties have to raise resources to fund state obligations. It is critical to improve transparency and governance by acting on these funding priorities.

County supervisors also reviewed and deliberated the Elected Officials Retirement Plan (EORP) funding crisis. The EORP Plan was closed in 2013; however, a confluence of decisions by the pension system's board of trustees, successful litigation against efforts to reform the system, and action by the state legislature have degraded the plan's funded status to dangerously low levels. Recent estimates suggest the plan may have a life of fewer than 10 years, while the obligations are essentially guaranteed by the Arizona Constitution.

Depending on how the state addresses its obligation to fix the problem, counties could face major financial exposure, likely forcing tax increases and degradations of other basic government services. The CSA Board of Directors provided feedback into a draft policy statement and strategy that will continue to be refined based on new actuarial analysis that should be released soon by the EORP Trustees.

Counties are also requesting the permanent discontinuation of the use of Highway User Revenue Funds (HURF) for purposes other than road activities; seeking to secure in-lieu lottery appropriations for rural counties and ensure the continued inclusion of "Flexibility Language" in the state budget.

CSA also adopted 7 county-submitted statutory proposals for CSA's agenda for the 2018 legislative session, including proposals to modernize payment options for purchases of state land, provide more flexibility and clarity for the serving of zoning violations, and to ensure adequate legal counsel for juvenile dependency cases.

CSA staff will begin briefing legislators on these matters in preparation for the 2018 session.

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## Legislative Panel Previews State Picture for 2018

On Wednesday, Senator Katie Hobbs, Senator Karen Fann, Representative Heather Carter, and Representative Drew John previewed the upcoming 2018 Legislative Session during the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual CSA Legislative Summit.

They explored a variety of issues including the one-time county cost shift relief, the ongoing challenges with the state budget, transportation resources, the upcoming election and legislative leadership changes and the importance of the state county partnership.

CSA appreciates these leaders making the time to join us this week!

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## CSA Board Calls On State to Increase Investment in Transportation

The CSA Board of Directors unanimously passed Resolution 2-17 requesting that State Leaders take action to increase state and local investment in transportation infrastructure.



Supervisors and staff discussed the deteriorating condition of county transportation infrastructure as their number one constituent complaint. The weakening ability of existing resources to meet local needs is detrimental for economic development, public safety and quality of life in communities across the state. The consensus of the CSA Board of Directors is that the existing transportation model is inadequately resourced, and, absent action, will continue to degrade without new funding mechanisms.

The main problem with the existing funding model is that it relies heavily on an 18-cent gas tax, established in 1990 and not indexed for inflation. 18-cents in the early 1990's is worth less than a nickel today due to inflation of the cost of materials for road building and maintenance. The effects of inflation, increased vehicle fuel efficiency, and other changes in commuting behavior make it clear that the current HURF funding model is not sustainable and will fall short of meeting infrastructure needs.

HURF restorations to local governments will help, but only addresses a fraction of the infrastructure demands. Recognizing a growing crisis that will impede economic development and threaten public safety on roadways, county supervisors endorsed a policy statement urging state lawmakers to identify and enact revenue enhancements for the existing HURF distribution system and to pursue policies that improve efficient utilization of transportation resources.

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## Summit Participants Tour Salt River Project Watershed



We would like to give a warm thank you to Salt River Project (SRP) for hosting a watershed helicopter tour for County Supervisors Association Legislative Policy Summit participants on Tuesday. The hour-long helicopter tour flew participants over the Salt River Watersheds, which include: Roosevelt Dam, Horse Mesa Dam, Mormon Flat Dam and Stewart Mountain Dam.

To learn more about SRP's work with forest health and the watershed, please [click here](#).

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