



# Maricopa County

March 10, 2011

Dear Senators and Representatives:

We are writing to all of you on behalf of Maricopa County to express our alarm at the budget being proposed in the Senate. It is our understanding that the proposal will shift \$150 million to counties. This would be in addition to the \$36 million shift in the Governor's FY '12 proposal and the tens of millions of dollars in shifts that were implemented in FYs '09, '10 and '11.

Maricopa County cannot possibly survive this reckless financial proposal. The County property taxpayer has given the State \$120 million dollars already during this economic crisis. We slashed budgets and personnel beginning in 2007 in order to keep our budget balanced and honor the financial sacrifice of taxpayers. We acted early and responsibly; the state did not. We have cut nearly \$300 million by making hard decisions that avoided any accumulation of debt. We ask you to not burden the property tax payers of Maricopa County, the overwhelming majority of whom are our common constituents, with unreasonable budgetary policies.

Over the next few years, Maricopa County has critical projects to fund. This includes the construction of a 911 Emergency Call Center, a law enforcement communications system, and must continue to fund other critical law enforcement operations. The budget proposed in the Senate will wipe out money saved for these critical projects and many others.

Additionally, not only would this shift drain reserves for projects, it will cripple our ability to maintain current service levels. Counties would necessarily be placed in the untenable situation of having to raise taxes during difficult economic times on a population facing enough current challenges. Equally disturbing is the fact that counties, to avoid bankruptcy, would have to request a lifting of the cap on taxes to attempt to deal with this drastic proposal. We don't want to raise taxes, and we won't have to if the Senate avoids this devastating maneuver.

In closing, I ask that you oppose shifts that are simply unsustainable by any of the counties. The proposal robs Peter to tax Paul. It is not equitable that the Maricopa County property owners pay their State taxes and then also have their County tax dollars taken to make up the State's shortfall. We are managing through this devastating crisis; please do not punish our good stewardship of the taxpayer's dollars.

Joseph M. Arpaio  
Sheriff

Andy Kunasek  
Chairman  
Board of Supervisors

Bill Montgomery  
County Attorney