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**CSAC Takes Governor to Task
for Ill-Conceived Special Election**

SACRAMENTO – At a time when counties are swimming in red-ink, eliminating critical services and laying off hundreds of employees, they are now faced with the unanticipated cost of a special election to fill the vacated senate seat of newly appointed Lt. Governor Abel Maldonado; a cost that could be easily avoided if the Governor had chosen a more logical course of consolidating the election of Senate District 15 with the November general election.

In a [pointed letter](#), the California State Association of Counties takes issue with the Governor's proclamation for a special election. Not just because of the \$6.5 million price tag that comes with it, but the fact that the timing of the special election puts at least one county, Monterey, in the untenable position of violating the Voters Rights Act related to the location of polling places. The other impacted counties are San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara, and Santa Cruz.

"Political issues aside, the impact that these special elections have on counties must be factored in to any decision by the Governor," says Paul McIntosh, CSAC Executive Director. At best, this is an error on the part of the Governor's Office, not taking into consideration the costs and legal issues that counties must comply with in order to conduct special elections. At worst, it demonstrates a sad lack of awareness and respect for the counties' role in elections and the current economic conditions they are facing, in large part, due to the State not paying their bills for mandated services counties must provide."

It's important to note that the law that previously required the state to reimburse counties for special elections sunset in 2008 and as a result, counties must cover all costs. Two bill currently pending in the Legislature, AB 1769 (Tran) and SB 994 (Price), would reinstate this requirement for 2009 and 2010 (AB 1769) and into the future (SB 994).

The California State Association of Counties (CSAC) is the voice of California's 58 counties at the state and federal level. The Association's long-term objective is to significantly improve the fiscal health of all California counties – from Alpine County with a little more than 1,200 people to Los Angeles County with more than 10 million – so

they can adequately meet the demand for vital public programs and services. CSAC also places a strong emphasis on educating the public about the value and need for county programs and services.

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