



NEWS RELEASE OC 60-11
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Court Leaders Report on Managing in Face of Funding Cuts *Current Efforts Cannot be Continued*

SAN FRANCISCO—Presiding judges and court executives from around the state told the state Judicial Council Wednesday that steps they have taken in the last four years to manage funding cuts cannot be sustained indefinitely.

The frank assessment came during the first open meeting of the Judicial Council's educational meeting. The session was opened to the public and media at the direction of Chief Justice Tani Cantil-Sakauye to make the council's meetings more transparent and informative. The sessions are designed to provide information only to Judicial Council members; no actions are taken. In opening the session, Court of Appeal Justice Douglas P. Miller, the newly appointed Executive and Planning Chair, told council members that the change in format came after a "robust, candid, and productive discussions" during a June planning meeting. "More changes will come," he promised.

Starting on Friday, August 25, the council's regular business meetings, which have always been open to the public and media, will feature an expanded and more liberal public comment period so interested parties can address the council on topics as they come up for discussion.

During Thursday's educational meeting, the current, former and incoming chairs of the Trial Court Presiding Judges Advisory Committee and the Court Executives Advisory Committee told the council that they have done everything from going paperless to eliminating court cell phones and lunches for jurors to save money. Other courts pooled court reporters instead of providing each judge with a court reporter. Some prepaid retirement benefits to provide a 5 percent cost savings.

But they agreed such cuts cannot be sustained if the state continues to reduce the amount of funding it is obligated to provide for the courts. And there was a general consensus that more needs to be done to convince the state Legislature and the Governor that reduced funding, such as this year's \$350 million budget cut, cannot be continued if the courts are to survive.

An archived audiocast and transcript of the August 24 Educational Meeting is available on the Judicial Council Meetings page of the California Courts website at www.courts.ca.gov/3044.htm.

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The Judicial Council is the policymaking body of the California courts, the largest court system in the nation. Under the leadership of the Chief Justice and in accordance with the California Constitution, the council is responsible for ensuring the consistent, independent, impartial, and accessible administration of justice. The Administrative Office of

the Courts carries out the official actions of the council and promotes leadership and excellence in court administration.