

Dean T. Stout  
*Presiding Judge*

Brian J. Lamb  
*Judge*



*Tammy Grimm*  
*Executive Officer*

*Virginia Bird*  
*Assistant Executive*  
*Officer*

## Superior Court of California County of Inyo

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July 22, 2012

The Honorable Tani Cantil-Sakauye  
Chief Justice of California and  
Chair of the Judicial Council  
455 Golden Gate Avenue  
San Francisco, CA 94102

**Re: Strategic Evaluation Committee (SEC) Report—Comments of  
Ms. Tammy L. Grimm, Court Executive Officer, Inyo Superior  
Court**

Dear Chief Justice Cantil-Sakauye and Members of the Judicial Council:

I personally write this letter in response to your invitation to provide comments about the Strategic Evaluation Committee (SEC) report.

It was not only bold- but brave- of the Chief to initiate the SEC to gain superior understanding of the branch's structure upon her arrival and new position. The SEC Committee should be commended for their exhausting commitment, open and candid observations and statements, and willingness to listen/meet with anyone willing to share their concerns and observations. It is clear that the SEC committee, through their report, has effectuated greater transparency and full disclosure of the organizational and structural strengths and weaknesses of the California Court system. I am also extremely appreciative of the Judicial Council's adoption of a public comment process to permit input and suggestions- this is extremely important to our branch goals of promoting public trust and confidence.

This report, published at the same time that the Judicial Branch was hit with the worst budget reductions in our history, was and is needed. I support the premise and reasoning behind the report's creation and necessity. I am encouraged by

the notion that this report brings greater transparency and accountability to the Administrative Office of the Courts.

However, I hope that the Judicial Council does not rush too quickly to adopt the full report without thoughtful and slow consideration of the recommendations and their potential impact. I believe it would be beneficial and advisable for the Judicial Council to wait and work with the new Administrative Director on this report; the new Administrative Director should be permitted to weigh in on any future changes or branch decisions rather than have the changes and report forced upon them. I urge you to be watchful of the operational, fiscal, and systemic pressures that these findings may have on our branch, courts, and public. With the 2012-13 budget reductions and sweeps, Courts need resources more than ever.

As Court Executive Officer of a small, rural two-judge Court, I agree with the SEC report that the AOC should "refocus on performing mandatory and core functions, and assume a customer-service orientation toward the courts." I urge you to remember the limited financial and operational resources available to small courts. AOC departments- particularly human resources, facilities, security, CJER, and OGC- have been integral and essential to my small court's success and day-to-day operations. The AOC hires some of the most intelligent, dedicated, hard-working and responsive people with whom I have ever worked. Small Courts do not have the resources to hire an in-house attorney, nor a security manager. Unlike larger courts, we are unable to maintain a dedicated HR staff member; therefore, turning to AOC staff has been important and essential in our own success and operations. For my small, geographically-expansive court, we consult with and utilize AOC staff daily for their expertise, skills, knowledge and direction that they provide. I ask that you please be mindful of this when downsizing and restructuring; small courts have a heavy necessity for and reliance upon AOC services and utilize the AOC staff in helping to maintain access to justice to our court users.

I agree that change is needed, but I ask that we walk rather than run in our implementation of it. I ask that you please remember the reliance of small courts upon AOC staff in analyzing how to best implement the SEC recommendations.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Tammy L. Grimm  
Court Executive Officer  
Inyo County Superior Court