



# NEWS RELEASE

ARIZONA SUPREME COURT

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS

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## **Arizona Judicial Branch Proposes Budget Reduction Plan**

The Arizona Judicial Branch, in responding to Arizona's budget crisis has submitted a budget reduction plan to Governor Brewer. As outlined in a letter from Chief Justice Rebecca White Berch to Governor Brewer, the plan is guided by three principles.

1. Preserve the Branch's ability to carry out its constitutional obligations and thus avoid a legal challenge;
2. Minimize to the extent possible, the impact of the cuts on public and community safety; and
3. Identify ways in which the Judicial Branch itself or by working cooperatively with other departments of the state and local government can increase revenue or reduce operational costs.

The plan includes the ability to recoup all or a portion of the State's share of superior court judges' salaries from the counties. However, at the same time, recognizing the county budget concerns, the plan proposes new fees and other revenue-generating actions to mitigate all of the new salary costs.

Justice Berch points out that the Judicial Branch has been cut or had funds swept totaling \$34 million the past two years. She also notes that across the board cuts and elimination of specific programs would jeopardize public safety, invite litigation and cost the state more, not less money by increased commitments to the Department of Corrections and the Department of Juvenile Corrections.

Justice Berch committed to Governor Brewer that the Judicial Branch will do its best to participate in finding budget solutions. In this regard, the Branch continues to work with the Legislature, other governmental agencies and the County Supervisors Association

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