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## **MINNESOTA LOCAL GOVERNMENTS CALL ON STATE LEADERS FOR PARTNERSHIP, FLEXIBILITY IN PUBLIC SERVICE REDESIGN**

*New Report Shows Redesign and Collaboration Among  
Cities, Counties and School Districts Underway Statewide*

**Saint Paul, Minn.** – Today at a Capitol press conference, representatives from the Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC), League of Minnesota Cities (LMC) and the Minnesota School Boards Association (MSBA) called on Minnesota’s state leaders to grant local governments the flexibility needed to continue and expand public service redesign efforts across the state. Local leaders also urged state leaders to join them in committing to redesign as a central strategy for addressing the state’s long-term, structural budget deficit and commended the growing interest in redesign among legislators and Administration.

At the press conference, the three associations released a joint report, “Focus on Outcomes: Redesigning Minnesota’s Local Governments,” which chronicles the redesign ideas being implemented statewide, barriers local governments face in redesign and opportunities to encourage greater cross-sector collaboration among Minnesota’s state and local governments. The report is based on the perspectives of more than 400 city, county and school district leaders gathered at a series of six Local Government Innovation Forums. The events were held in Rochester, Hibbing, Bemidji, Marshall, Waite Park and Eagan throughout November 2011.

The association leaders were joined at the press conference by a bi-partisan and bi-cameral group of legislators including Reps. Carol McFarlane (R-White Bear Lake) and Paul Marquart (D-Dilworth), co-chairs of the House Redesign Caucus. The Caucus was a key supporter of the Innovation Forums. Sens. John Carlson (R-Bemidji), Terri Bonoff (D-Minnetonka) and Michelle Benson (R-Ham Lake) also joined the press conference to demonstrate their support for increased local government flexibility.

“Cities, counties and school boards all understand that, despite our November forecast, our long-term financial picture for state and local governments is grim,” said Randy Maluchnik, Carver County Commissioner and president of the AMC. “The way we do business is going to have to change if we’re going to protect the outcomes Minnesotans expect from public services and offer taxpayers real cost savings. Today we’re calling on state leaders to join us as partners in this important conversation. We need the flexibility to innovate, not just the handcuffs of decreased funding, if we’re going to make redesign a reality.”

AMC is currently advancing the Minnesota Accountable Government Innovation and Collaboration Act, or MAGIC Act, in 2012 as one example of how state and local government can work together to support increased flexibility and foster redesign. The bill passed the Senate in 2011, and is being sponsored by Rep. McFarlane in the House of Representatives this session.

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In addition to the MAGIC Act, the report offered six recommendations for state and local governments and redesign advocates to consider moving forward:

1. Minnesota's state government officials should work with local government officials to provide more flexibility, allowing for innovation.
2. State and local government leaders should create opportunities to strengthen their partnership.
3. The Minnesota House Redesign Caucus and its Senate counterpart should thoroughly examine the innovations and redesign ideas offered at the Forums and look for opportunities for additional state-local collaboration.
4. A statewide task force outside of government should be created to help strategically guide local government innovation and redesign efforts in Minnesota.
5. Funding should be secured from the Legislature to assist local governments with implementing innovative redesigns with a high potential for replication and long-term cost savings.
6. A statewide plan articulating a vision for government services and defining state and local outcomes should be created.

"At the League, we have a database of local government innovations big and small that numbers over 1,000, so redesign is an idea that cities have pursued for some time," said Jim Miller, executive director of LMC. "These events showed that not just cities, but also counties and school districts, are deeply interested in working together across jurisdictions to find new ways to provide public services, preserve outcomes and respond to our financial realities. If we are not given the flexibility to innovate we will not survive cuts and other impactful changes from the state. I hope that this report will compel our state leaders to give us the tools we need to pursue even more comprehensive local redesigns."

"School districts, cities and counties are eager to explore new ways to continue working together and to redesign how we deliver essential services," added Mahtomedi School Board Member Kevin Donovan. "But that means we also need help from our state leaders to succeed. Dollars are important, but our even more essential need is for state leaders to allow us the freedom to be our own research and development departments – to explore, to learn and to innovate."

The six Forums were hosted by AMC, LMC and the MSBA in partnership with the Minnesota House Redesign Caucus and InCommons. The events were sponsored by the Bush Foundation with additional support from its partners in Beyond the Bottom Line, a partnership of six leading foundations committed to supporting redesign and innovation for outcomes in Minnesota.

"Redesigning government will not be an easy task but, above all, the Local Government Innovation Forums showed that each local redesign – no matter how unique – starts with building relationships and developing a shared vision across jurisdictions," said Rep. McFarlane. "I hope that my colleagues in the Redesign Caucus and across the legislature will see these Forums and the work that continues to blossom from them as evidence of the need to reach out, work with our local governments, and give them the tools to do the hard work of redesign."

"What we have learned from local government leaders is that there is a genuine enthusiasm for collaboration and rethinking how we deliver public services," noted Bush Foundation Board Chair Jan Malcolm. "We believe the best solutions will come from local people armed with solid information and an appetite for seeking new partnerships. If our government leaders are thoughtful about redesign, both improving public service outcomes and saving taxpayer dollars are within reach."

To access the full report and more information about local government redesign efforts, as well as to view videos that encapsulate ideas that emerged from the events, go to [www.lmc.org](http://www.lmc.org) or [www.mncounties.org/redesign](http://www.mncounties.org/redesign).

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**The Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC)** is a voluntary, nonpartisan statewide organization that has assisted the state's 87 counties in providing effective county governance to the people of Minnesota since 1909. The association works closely with the legislative and administrative branches of government in seeing that legislation and policies favorable to counties are enacted. AMC also provides educational programs, training, research and communications for county officials.

**League of Minnesota Cities (LMC)** is a membership organization dedicated to promoting excellence in local government. The League serves its more than 830 member cities through advocacy, education and training, policy development, risk management and other services.

**Minnesota School Boards Association (MSBA)** supports, promotes and enhances the work of public school boards and public education in Minnesota. MSBA was formed in 1920 and is the nation's eighth-oldest school boards association. MSBA represents 336 traditional public school districts in the state.

**InCommons** is a new and growing community-based initiative that connects Minnesotans – face-to-face and online – so they can find and share credible tools, knowledge and resources to solve problems. It's based on the idea that lessons learned in one community become starting points for communities and individuals addressing similar issues in other towns and cities in Minnesota.

**Minnesota House of Representatives Redesign Caucus** was established as a bipartisan collaborative vehicle for legislators, community groups, public, private and nonprofit organizations and citizens to come together and improve Minnesota government. It strives to discover, encourage and implement the best ideas and innovations in the area of public sector redesign.

The mission of the **Bush Foundation** is to be a catalyst for the courageous leadership necessary to create sustainable solutions to tough public problems and ensure community vitality. The Foundation was established in 1953 by 3M executive Archibald Bush and his wife, Edyth, and today works in communities across Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota and the 23 Native nations that share that same geographic area. For more information, visit [www.BushFoundation.org](http://www.BushFoundation.org)

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