



# Colin L. Read, Mayor

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To Whom It May Concern,

At a recent visit to Plattsburgh, Governor Cuomo described his County-wide Shared Services Property Tax Savings Plan. As a former county legislator who worked hard to create opportunities for shared services, and as a city mayor who strives to find efficiencies, I applaud any measure that encourages local government to search more deeply to find efficiencies and share services.

The Governor's plan gives counties the responsibility for bringing together multiple local governments. This makes sense. Counties often can bring to bear the most administrative experience and public resources within a region. They are also the common denominator of the various municipalities within their borders. They have the economies of scale that they can lend to municipalities, but often have little time or motivation to do so.

I am confident that counties, cities, and towns will quickly discover mutual advantage once we are induced to go through the shared service and improved efficiency exercise. From road paving to information technology, planning to assessment, and various contributions to public safety, counties and municipalities cannot be weakened by working together, and indeed should almost always be more efficient and better able to serve the public.

In fact, these discussions may simply be the ice-breaker. Once we create a culture of cooperation, I'm confident the dialog will foster discussions currently uncomtemplatable. Of course, I recognize change is hard, and I know just how difficult it is for local leaders to remain under the tax cap. The pressure often seems unrelenting, given rising health care costs and unpredictable costs for such commodities as salt, asphalt, and diesel fuel. But mandates such as tax caps, while imperfect, and subject to some improvements, nonetheless provide the discipline we sometimes need, and the reminder our citizens demand. Once we go through the exercise, I believe we will be glad we did.

I, for one, appreciate the focus. I'll do what I can not only to support the spirit of such efforts to encourage dialog between local governments and with our residents, but I'll also strive to help improve such initiatives so they produce the desired results without imposing hardships for circumstances that municipalities cannot anticipate or avoid.

Best regards,

Colin Read  
Mayor of the City of Plattsburgh