



SHASTA COUNTY

Cathy Darling, County Clerk/Registrar of Voters
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March 26, 2007

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Honorable Debra Bowen
Secretary of State
Attn: Voting Systems Review, 6th Floor
1500 11th Street, 6th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Secretary Bowen:

I write to you today to comment on the "Top to Bottom Review of Electronic Voting Systems Certified for Use in California Elections" criteria published by your office on March 22, 2007.

I have only a few comments to make specifically, as I am aware of many other responses that cover other important points as well.

I have mentioned this to Secretary of State staff more than once: **please utilize the resources that you have available to you; namely, the capable staff members throughout California counties.** No one knows this equipment as well as the people who use it, who program it, test it, run it through pre-election logic and accuracy tests, and assist poll workers in its use on a busy election day. I believe that you will find many counties willing and able to offer assistance if you put out the call.

In the introduction to the criteria, you list the goals of the review, which include accuracy. Yet there are no details about the process to be used to verify the accuracy of this equipment. It seems a glaring omission: if a voting system (no matter what its component's are) cannot count the votes accurately, other considerations seem immaterial. **Accuracy should be a primary element in determining what systems are acceptable for use in California.**

The timeline involved is a somewhat intimidating one for California counties like Shasta that have a **November 2007 election.** August 3, 2007 is not a reasonable date to be notified of a voting system change for an election 95 days away.

On a slightly different, but related topic, I wanted to inform you of Shasta's experience in procurement timelines in 2003, when a new voting system was purchased. Shasta County was one of the nine punch card counties that were de-certified in advance of the 2004 Presidential election season.

On October 8, 2002, the County issued an RFP for a new voting system. A final contract was approved by the Board of Supervisors on May 20, 2003. The time spent was 283 days, or nine months and 10 days. During that time, electronic voting was still new in California. Vendors were not yet impacted by requests for HAVA-compliant (and more importantly, perhaps, HAVA-funded) voting equipment. No special requirements, such as ranked choice voting were involved. My point is that procurement, under the best of circumstances, is a time intensive effort for a jurisdiction. Any jurisdiction. Even one with the buying power of California.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or I can be of any assistance at (530) 225-5166 or cdarling@co.shasta.ca.us.

Regards,



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