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From: Gail Pellerin [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 29, 2007 3:51 PM
To: Voting Systems
Subject: Draft Criteria comments

March 29, 2007

Sent by e-mail and FAX

Secretary Debra Bowen
1500 11th St
Sacramento, CA 95814
ATTN: Voting Systems Review, 6th Floor

Dear Secretary Bowen,

I am writing in response to your request for public comment on your "Top-to-Bottom Review of Electronic Voting Systems Certified for Use in California Elections." I concur with issues raised by the California Association of Clerks and Elections Officials (CACEO), specifically, the limited scope of the review, the unstated qualifications of the reviewers, the lack of measurable criteria and declared thresholds for acceptability, and the critical timing of potential de-certification of voting systems prior to the 2008 Presidential elections. I am very concerned about the short timeframe for public response. While I understand your desire to act expeditiously, 8 calendar days is insufficient time to respond. I suggest that there be a 30-day public comment period.

As you know, all voting systems used in California have been federally qualified and state certified. Moreover, these systems have been put to the ultimate test in the November 2006 election where more than 8 million voters cast votes securely and those votes were counted accurately. Santa Cruz County uses the Sequoia Optech paper ballots for voting by mail, Insight scanners with Optech paper ballots at the polls, and provides one AVC Edge touch screen per polling site to meet the accessibility requirements of the Help America Vote Act. This voting system was selected by Santa Cruz County after months of analyzing Requests for Qualifications, obtaining public input, conducting demonstration fairs, convening a Public Voting System Advisory Committee and a county committee that attended presentations by all vendors. Sequoia received the highest praise from our voters with disabilities, poll workers, and voters in general. Moreover, Sequoia has been providing election support services to Santa Cruz County for more than 25 years and Sequoia had the highest rating of customer satisfaction in the reference checks.

The processes and procedures we have in place give me great confidence in the security of our voting system. Moreover, this system fully complies with all state and federal laws. While improvements can certainly be made and constant review of voting systems is imperative to achieving the highest levels of security, accessibility, ballot secrecy, accuracy and usability, it is essential that these improvements be allowed to occur according to a schedule that will not adversely

impact the three statewide elections schedule in 2008.

The draft Top-to-Bottom review criteria seems to be limited to electronic voting systems as the title of the document suggests. I urge you to be comprehensive and include all voting systems, including blended ones like Santa Cruz County. I believe you will find that no voting system is perfect. And all voting systems must have the safeguards, testing, and security in place in order to ensure clean and efficient elections. This has been the case ever since I began managing elections in 1993, and holds true regardless of which type of voting system is deployed.

The draft Top-to-Bottom review criteria makes no mention of, nor provision for, the cost of replacing voting systems should they be decertified. Within the past year, Santa Cruz County has spent more than \$2 million in state and federal tax dollars on voting equipment to meet the federal mandates of HAVA. Considering the cash-strapped condition of California counties and the State (should requiring replacement of functional, legally compliant, voting systems be deemed a mandate), the economic feasibility of replacing such systems should be included in the review criteria.

Finally, I urge you to follow state and federal laws as you embark on this review and take into account the security and testing procedures in place. County election officials work tirelessly to ensure safe and accurate elections. We are dedicated to this democratic process and want to continue to provide the same level of outstanding service to our voters.

Thank you for your consideration of our concerns. If I can provide any further information, please feel free to contact me at [REDACTED]

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