



# OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE

DENNIS RICHARDSON  
SECRETARY OF STATE

July 25, 2018

The Honorable Senator Peter Courtney, Co-Chair  
The Honorable Representative Nancy Nathanson, Co-Chair  
Joint Committee on Ways and Means  
900 Court Street NE  
H-178 State Capitol  
Salem, OR 97301-4048

Dear Co-Chairpersons:

We appreciate your partnership and support of our efforts to improve Oregon elections technology survivability and security. As we continue to increase elections security protections, we are excited to inform you that we have recently identified a way to achieve better security outcomes at a lower cost than the proposal you approved in May. This will free up funds for security protections even beyond what was originally contemplated. We are very proud that our professional IT elections security team continues to exemplify the values of accountability and efficiency as careful stewards of taxpayer money.

As you recall, in April of this year, the Secretary of State's Office was notified of a \$5.3M federal grant awarded to the State of Oregon to improve the administration of elections for federal office, including the enhancement of election technology and security improvements for Oregon elections systems. Shortly after the notice of award, we submitted a proposal to the State Emergency Board for a \$3.2M expenditure of the federal grant, which was subsequently approved by the E-Board in May of this year. The majority of these funds were designated for improving the survivability of the critical systems that run Oregon Motor Voter (OMV) and the Oregon Elections System for Tracking and Reporting (ORESTAR).

During the past 60 days, the Secretary of State's Office developed a technical design and conducted a formal procurement to obtain technical assistance from the commercial sector. On July 11th, after a careful evaluation of vendor proposals and potential alternatives, the Secretary of State's Office cancelled the procurement for the original plan based on the recommendation of a proposal evaluation team, who reviewed all the vendor proposals and determined that the offered solutions would not achieve the original goals set forth in the grant award description. The cancelled procurement adheres to the state's "stage-gate" process, which uses a series of "go"/"no go" check points at each project stage before proceeding. In this case, the team identified a superior alternative before any federal funds were expended that better meets our shared goals of increasing elections security.

The goals are (1.) to provide an initial set of enhancements that will support the November 2018 election and subsequent improvements in 2019, (2.) to modernize elections systems infrastructure, and (3.) to ensure alignment with agency infrastructure and security policies. To accomplish these goals, we have evaluated an improved approach that will increase speed, scalability, productivity, performance, and reliability of the overall systems. It's important to emphasize that this applies only to the ORESTAR and OMV applications and not to voter registration and vote tallies.<sup>1</sup> Security for these systems will be provided using established security programs for closely monitored cloud computing such as System and Organization Controls (SOC-2). This system is a current state standard auditing procedure that ensures service providers securely manage data. We also are evaluating the use of the Federal Risk and Authorization Management Program (FedRAMP), a government-wide program that provides a core set of processes that ensures effective, safe cloud security for the government. FedRAMP, is currently used by the NSA, FBI, Pentagon, and other federal agencies that have moved to the cloud, and provides a standardized approach to security assessment, authorization, and continuous monitoring for cloud products and services.

We are deeply appreciative of your on-going support and will continue to update you on our progress as we move forward. We are always grateful for the opportunity to highlight the great work that our professional team is doing to make Oregon elections security a model for the nation, while also saving taxpayer money, time, and resources.

Sincerely



Dennis Richardson

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<sup>1</sup> It is important to note that the Oregon Centralized Voter Registration (OCVR) system, which contains the official database of all of Oregon's voters, is not included in this effort and will remain in government controlled facilities for the foreseeable future.