



March 27, 2017

State Government Finance Committee
State Office Building
St. Paul, Minnesota

Members of the Committee:

Thank you for taking a moment to review our testimony on HF 691 in regard to a lack of an allocation for an election equipment grant fund. As you heard during our testimony last week, Minnesota Association of County Officers (MACO) county election administrators recognize our role in the elections process and our need to prioritize funding for election technology now and in the future; however, without a funding partnership from the state at this time, many counties will not be able to purchase needed updates to election technology and Minnesota voters will begin to see a wide disparity of access to current technology across the state.

73 of Minnesota's 87 counties have identified election technology purchases to occur in the next four years if grant funding is available. In all of these cases, state assistance with grant funding is a vital component that must be addressed to allow these purchases to occur without crippling financial impact on local levies. 54 counties would have to levy significant dollars in the year of purchase, and 34 would also spread the burden of the purchase with a cost-share program with local municipalities which would also have major local tax impact. 21 counties have some level of funding identified or set aside for election technology purchases, with the majority of these having approximately 25% of the purchase price identified.

Many counties have identified estimated costs for equipment including tabulators, assistive voting technology and electronic pollbooks based on purchase plans in the next four years. These estimates equate to approximately \$19.6 million with the vast majority to replace federally mandated AVT equipment and tabulating equipment. Several counties have also identified cost needs to implement or expand electronic pollbook programs as well.

MACO is very encouraged that election technology needs have been heard this session and would appreciate the opportunity to work with the committee to identify appropriate funding levels that would benefit all Minnesota counties.

Sincerely,

Deborah A. Erickson

Deborah A. Erickson
Chair, MACO Elections Committee