



Robert J. Hiivala,
Auditor/Treasurer
3650 Braddock Ave NE
Suite 1200
Buffalo, MN 55313

Ph: (763) 682-7578
Fax: (763) 682-7873

www.co.wright.mn.us

March 13, 2023

To Whom It May Concern

Sent via email

I want to thank you for recognizing the importance of holding our elections in the most efficient, as well as voter and election official-friendly manner possible. This is more important than ever in this time of extreme disruption due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Since it is clear to me that Minnesota will not move to an all mail-in ballot system, I do want to take this opportunity to restate my hope that you would consider allowing the counties their choice in securing the equipment that will be best able to address the challenges of all elections.

Voting in the state primary and general election will be now be difficult enough for our citizens. All the county elections officials that I talk to want to do everything we can reduce those challenges. I, and my fellow county officials, see the upcoming elections as a struggle. That is why we need every available tool at our disposal to reduce the enormous challenges for our counties, cities, election officials and voters.

We believe that many voters will want to exercise their option of absentee voting, either by mail or during the in-person early voting period. We have seen adoption of this way of voting increasing each election cycle, and are concerned with the virus conditions the desire will exponentially increase, putting more burden on cities and counties. I know that it is your desire to at least maintain, and even enhance the voter's experience, in a safe and secure way.

Newer voting technology does both of those for us. One particular concern we must address is the estimation of voter turnout, and what proportion of that will be via the absentee/early voting option. Being able to print our ballots on demand will help us avoid costly over printing of the ballots needed, and enhances the delivery of the proper ballot to the voter.

There are several vendor system available that will help us meet the election challenges. Adoption by the Legislature of an amendment to the state statutes that will allow us to retire our outdated AutoMarks and replace them one of the new on-demand printable ballot systems is a critical need in this election.

The House has in 2017 passed this legislation overwhelmingly. We respectfully ask that you work with Secretary of State Steve Simon, your Senate leadership and your House election counterparts to pass this critical legislation this year.

Thank you for listening. The counties, cities, election officials and voters need your leadership on this issue.

We hope you will say “Yes, I will help, I will lead.” Your counties and your voters will thank you.

Please call me to discuss if you need more details on this vital issue.

Sincerely,

Robert J. Hiivala
Wright County Auditor/Treasurer