



★ VIRGINIA ★
DEPARTMENT *of* ELECTIONS

News Release

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VIRGINIA DECERTIFIES PAPERLESS VOTING EQUIPMENT

RICHMOND – The Department of Elections today called for the immediate decertification of Direct Record Electronic (DRE) voting equipment in Virginia, and the State Board of Elections approved the request in an effort to increase the security and integrity of Virginia’s voting systems ahead of the November election.

The vote to decertify the DRE, or touchscreen, voting equipment is effective immediately and means that DREs may no longer be used for elections in Virginia. DREs are used in 22 localities across the Commonwealth.

The Department of Elections had requested a security assessment by the Virginia Information Technology Agency (VITA) of various paperless voting systems in use in Virginia and determined that decertification was necessary to safeguard against unauthorized access to the machines. Additionally, the DREs in use in Virginia do not have a voter-verifiable paper audit trail, which is an important security feature provided by the paper systems.

“The security of the election process is always of paramount importance. The Department is continually vigilant on matters related to security of voting equipment used in Virginia,” said **Edgardo Cortés, Virginia’s Commissioner of Elections**. “The ability to meaningfully participate in our democracy is one of the most important rights that we have as citizens, and the Department of Elections is dedicated to maintaining voters’ confidence in the democratic process.”

James Alcorn, Chair of the State Board of Elections, added: “Our No. 1 priority is to make sure that Virginia elections are carried out in a secure and fair manner. The step we took today to decertify paperless voting systems is necessary to ensure the integrity of Virginia’s elections.”

The Department contacted all DRE localities in early August about the security concerns so that they had sufficient time to prepare for a smooth transition. Throughout this process, the

Department has coordinated with local officials and vendors, which have affirmed adequate inventory and staff to handle equipping and training localities with new voting equipment. “The Department has served as a significant resource during this process and their work has helped general registrars minimize voter impact and has even saved local taxpayer dollars,” said **Tracy Howard, President, Voter Registrars Association of Virginia.**

For several years, the Department of Elections has encouraged localities to upgrade voting equipment that has reached its expected end of life. In response to these concerns, Governor McAuliffe proposed adding \$28 million to the state budget for all Virginia localities to purchase new voting machines in 2015. However, the proposal was not approved by the General Assembly.

As of today, the following 22 Virginia localities use DREs: Bath, Buchanan, Chesapeake, Colonial Heights, Culpeper, Cumberland, Emporia, Falls Church, Gloucester, Hopewell, Lee, Madison, Martinsville, Norfolk, Poquoson, Portsmouth, Rappahannock, Russell, Surry, Sussex, Tazewell, and Washington.

Seven (7) of the above twenty-two (22) localities have informed the Department that they have contracted to secure new equipment for use in the November General Election, and three (3) have indicated pending procurements. Additional information about these individual localities and their voting equipment is available here:

<http://www.elections.virginia.gov/registration/voting-systems/index.html>.

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