



September 10, 2021

San Francisco Board of Supervisors  
San Francisco Elections Commission  
San Francisco Director of Elections John Arntz

By email: [Board.of.Supervisors@sfgov.org](mailto:Board.of.Supervisors@sfgov.org), [elections.commission@sfgov.org](mailto:elections.commission@sfgov.org),  
[john.arntz@sfgov.org](mailto:john.arntz@sfgov.org)

**Re: Open Source Voting System Pilot for November 2022 Election**

Dear San Francisco Board of Supervisors, Elections Commission, and Director of Elections John Arntz:

On behalf of [VotingWorks](#), I express our interest in helping the City and County of San Francisco pilot an open source voting system during the November 2022 election per the guidelines of [California Elections Code Section 19209](#), which was added by [SB 360 \(Padilla, 2013-2014\)](#). This would be the first election in California with an SB 360 pilot of an open source voting system.

We see San Francisco as a leader in promoting open source election administration, for example through the Board's [2014 resolution](#) supporting the creation of open source voting systems, the Commission's [2015](#) and [2018](#) resolutions on open source voting, the Department's [2017 RFP](#) for developing an open source voting system, the Mayor and Board's allocation of funding in 2018 to explore the development of an open source voting system, and Board President Walton's [recent rulemaking petition](#) to the California Secretary of State regarding piloting open source voting systems. VotingWorks would be happy to support and help continue San Francisco's leadership in election transparency by partnering on a pilot of our open source voting system at no expense to the City and County.

VotingWorks is a non-partisan non-profit organization whose mission is to build voter confidence through open source election technology. Our voting system, built entirely with only [publicly available open-source software](#) and commercial off-the-shelf hardware, is a complete voting system that has been in use since 2019 in Mississippi. All votes cast using VotingWorks are on a paper ballot. Voters are given the choice to mark their ballots by hand or using a ballot marking device, and all votes are tabulated on optical scanners — either at the polling place or at a central location.

To date, two Mississippi counties use the complete VotingWorks system for all voters, and twelve Mississippi jurisdictions have piloted VotingWorks for absentee voting. As the only non-profit vendor of open-source voting system software, our customers benefit from a [total cost of ownership savings of 50 percent](#) compared to other vendors and [see VotingWorks as the most simple and transparent system available](#).

VotingWorks has extensive experience working with California election administrators through our development and implementation of Arlo, the open source tool [selected by the California Secretary of State](#) for counties to conduct risk-limiting audits and confirm election outcomes.

In 2022, we plan to receive federal certification from the Election Assistance Commission as we are developing our product to the most recent Voluntary Voting System Guidelines Version 2.0. Our goal is to be the first vendor to receive certification to this modern standard that improves on the 16-year old voting system standard that other systems, including the one used in San Francisco today, are certified to.

VotingWorks offers to implement and service our system for the pilot at no cost to San Francisco. To help ensure a successful pilot, VotingWorks can provide on-site staff as needed and conduct a public demo in advance of the election. In addition, VotingWorks can help draft, in partnership with the Director of Elections, a plan for the pilot program that follows the Secretary of State's requirements and the past example of [Los Angeles County's November 2019 pilot](#). [California Elections Code Section 19209\(d\)](#) says that the Board of Supervisors would need to submit such a plan to the Secretary of State by February 8, 2022, which is nine months before the election.

If interested, we would be grateful to further discuss our organization, technology, and possible pilot structures with you. We are available to present and answer any questions at an upcoming Elections Commission meeting or at your convenience.

Sincerely,  
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