

Mailbox, Inbox, Ballot Box

Delivering Information to California Voters in the 21st Century

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary	2
Introduction and Overview	3
Structure of the California Election Administration.....	3
<i>Leadership</i>	3
<i>Voter Registration File</i>	3
<i>Voter Information</i>	4
Methods.....	5
Data Collection of County Services and Practices	5
Understanding Access and Acceptance of Electronic Resources.....	5
Comparative Industry Analysis	5
Cost Savings Analysis	6
County Services and Voter Communication.....	8
County Website Services.....	8
E-mail Addresses in the Voter Registration Database.....	9
E-mail Communication.....	10
Demographics of Electronic Uptake.....	11
Acceptance of Electronic Information.....	11
Policy Alternatives.....	13
The Current Delivery Method	13
Alternatives.....	14
<i>Alternative 1</i>	15
<i>A) Allow voters to opt-out of receiving paper information by mail and elect into accessing information online through the county elections website.</i>	15
<i>B) Allow voters to opt-out of receiving paper information by mail and elect into electronic delivery of voter information to a voter-supplied e-mail address.</i>	18
<i>Alternative 2: Change the default option for voter information to an electronic format (electronic delivery and/or website) and allow voters to opt-in to receiving voter information by mail.</i>	24

<i>Alternative 3: Restrict receipt of mailed county voter information to one per household, and not one per registered voter</i>	28
Conclusion	321
References.....	32
APPENDICES	41
Appendix A: Assembly Bill No. 1717	41
Appendix B: Survey Questionnaire	43
Appendix C: Survey Distribution.....	45
Appendix D: Sample Ballot Cost Estimates and Calculations.....	46
Appendix E: E-mail Communication in San Francisco County.....	47
Appendix F: Shareholder Notification E-mail Example	49

Tables and Figures

Figure 1: California County Website Services.....	8
Table 1: Estimated County Voter E-mail Addresses	9
Table 2: Estimated Sample Ballot Costs.....	13
Table 3: Estimated Cost Savings: Opt-out of Paper Delivery, Website Alternative	17
Table 4: Estimated Cost Savings: Opt-out of Paper Delivery, E-mail Alternative	21
Table 5: Estimated Cost Savings: Electronic Default Alternative.....	26
Table 6: Estimated Cost Savings: One Mailing per Household Alternative	29
Table 7: Sample Ballot Cost Estimates.....	46

Executive Summary

California counties disseminate voter information the same way today as they did 50 years ago. Each of California's 58 county elections offices mails every registered voter a paper sample ballot booklet and polling location notice for every city, state, and national election. California is only one of a handful of states to provide this service to voters, which requires substantial monetary and environmental resources.

There are more efficient methods to inform and meet the needs of voters than traditional paper delivery. Currently, most county elections offices provide voters with information via electronic mediums—86 percent of counties post mandatory voter information on their websites and 53 percent use e-mail to communicate directly with voters. Until recently however, these methods could only supplement, rather than replace paper delivery. Beginning in 2011, at the request of voters, counties will be allowed to replace paper with electronic information.

Many electronic information delivery models exist, as demonstrated by online banking, electronic billing and the electronic notification of shareholder proxies. These industries are helpful in assessing the following two electronic alternatives counties could employ:

Allow voters to opt-out of receiving paper information by mail, and instead choose to:

- 1) access information online through their county elections website; or,*
- 2) receive electronic delivery of voter information via e-mail.*

These electronic alternatives provide *receptive* voters a more modern, sustainable and accessible avenue to obtain necessary information. Although counties are not required to offer this service, replacing mailed paper copies with either of these alternatives could save individual counties upwards of 10 percent of their total election budget and increase access to voter information.

If paper delivery remains the default option for voter information in California, the law could be modified to allow counties to mail information only to every household, rather than to every voter—a simple amendment that could save individual counties up to \$2.3 million per election cycle. This amendment would mirror the current practice for distributing the State Voter Information Guide and could be implemented with either of the two electronic alternatives to maximize savings.

Introduction and Overview

This report examines the existing method of voter information dissemination in California and explores alternatives to more efficiently meet the needs of voters.

To evaluate potential alternative methods for the delivery of California voter information, it is first necessary to understand each county's voter registration database, election services and resources. The ability of counties to embrace new alternatives for transmitting voter information will depend heavily on their current practices and technological capabilities.

In addition to county resources, voter acceptance of electronic alternatives may vary due to Internet access and comfort with technology. Understanding these variances in voter populations across counties is essential to exploring viable alternatives.

Finally, as a variety of data exists on available information delivery alternatives, evidence from analogous industries were utilized to evaluate tradeoffs associated with each considered alternative.

Structure of the California Election Administration

Leadership

California's Secretary of State, elected to a four-year term by voters during a General Election, serves as the state's Chief Election Officer. The election administration in California however, is largely decentralized, with control distributed to the county elections official for each of California's 58 counties. The county elections official, whose title is often "Registrar of Voters" or "County Clerk," oversees and locally administers election activities such as:

- voter registration
- local and statewide petitions
- maintenance of precinct boundaries
- training and appointment of polling place election officers
- maintenance of the county's master voter file

The county elections official is elected by voters in 41 counties and appointed by the County Board of Supervisors in 17 counties.¹

Voter Registration File

California has the most registered voters of any state in the country, yet its voter registration system is out of date, and, according to reports by the California Secretary of State's office, does not meet federally legislated requirements outlined in the Help America Vote Act (HAVA)—a

¹These 17 counties include the five largest counties: Los Angeles, Orange, San Diego, San Bernardino and Riverside.

2002 federal law “to establish minimum election administration standards for States and units of local government.”²

Currently, each of California’s 58 county elections officials maintains a section of the state’s voter file that represents its population of registered voters. All 58 sets of voter registration records are reflected in a statewide voter registration database maintained by the Secretary of State.

HAVA requires each state to implement a centralized voter registration database that is “defined, maintained and administered at the state level.”³ According to the Secretary of State’s office the U.S. Department of Justice has deemed California compliant with the HAVA in the interim while the new database, *VoteCal*, is being created to more fully comply with HAVA’s requirement that list-maintenance activities be automated at the state level.⁴ California intends to invest over \$53 million in federal funding through the *VoteCal Statewide Voter Registration Project*.⁵ Once implemented, this registration system will allow the state to maintain and update voter records and will make new capabilities, such as online voter registration, possible. Officials hope to institute *VoteCal* by June 2014.⁶

Voter Information

Current California law mandates registered voters receive state and county voter information by the U.S. mail.

State Voter Information

For each statewide election, the Secretary of State is required to mail every registered household, or a household with one or more registered voters, one copy of the State Voter Information Guide.⁷ In 2009, Governor Schwarzenegger approved Assembly Bill 306, which requires the Secretary of State to create a procedure for voters to opt-out of receiving this information by mail. The procedure however, cannot be established until the Secretary of State has certified that California’s voter registration database complies with the HAVA.⁸ While the Secretary of State currently provides and is mandated to post the Voter Information Guide online,⁹ California voters must also receive it by mail until the HAVA requirements are met.

² Help America Vote Act of 2002, 116 §§ Stat. 1666-Public Law 107-252 (2002).

³ The Secretary of State’s *VoteCal Feasibility Study Report* (2006) states “section 303 of the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA) (Public Law 107-22, 107th Congress) mandates that each state implement a uniform, centralized, interactive, computerized voter registration database that is defined, maintained and administered at the state level.” This is also discussed in “California’s Plan for Voting in the 21st Century,” on the Secretary of State website.

⁴ Department of communications, California Secretary of State’s Office. 17 Sept. 2010.

⁵ The Secretary of State’s *VoteCal Special Project Report*, issued August 3, 2010, summarizes the allocated budget for the technology project, with a total estimated cost of \$53,467,773.

⁶ Confirmed with Evan Goldberg, Chief Deputy Secretary of State, 16 Sept. 2010.

⁷ California Elections Code 9094(a) “...the Secretary of State may mail only one ballot pamphlet to two or more registered voters having the same postal address.”

⁸ California Elections Code 9094.5(a).

⁹ California Elections Code 9082.7. “The Secretary of State shall disseminate the complete state ballot pamphlet over the Internet.”

County Voter Information

Unlike state voter information which is sent per household, county voter information must be sent to every voter. County elections officials are required to mail every registered voter notice of his or her polling location and a sample ballot for each statewide and local election.¹⁰

Recently, the mandate for delivering California county voter information was amended. Introduced by Assembly Member Kevin De Leon, Assembly Bill 1717 was approved by Governor Schwarzenegger in July 2010 and allows counties to develop procedures to “permit a voter to opt out of receiving his or her sample ballot, voter pamphlet, notice of polling place, and associated materials by mail and instead receive the materials electronically by e-mail or on the county's or city's Internet web site.”¹¹ See appendix A for the complete language of Assembly Bill 1717.

Methods

Data Collection of County Services and Practices

All 58 California county election offices provided information pertaining to their voter registration database and election services through survey, e-mail and telephone interviews. A ten-question online survey was initially distributed to county election directors through the California Association of Clerks and Election Officials LISTSERV. Survey responses were completed between February 2010 and April 2010, and reflect data from that time period. Follow-up phone calls and e-mails to some survey participants clarified submitted responses. The results from this survey were used to evaluate the feasibility of implementing electronic alternatives across counties. The survey is available in Appendix B and information pertaining to the distribution of the survey is provided in Appendix C.

Understanding Access and Acceptance of Electronic Resources

The successful implementation of any electronic alternative to voter information will depend heavily on the accessibility and preference of voters. Studies have shown that demographic and socioeconomic characteristics such as age, income, education, race and ethnicity correlate with an individual's access to the Internet, acceptance of electronic information alternatives, and likelihood of utilizing electronic government resources. Using data collected by the U.S. Census Bureau, these characteristics were explored across a sample of 15 California counties to consider voter acceptance of electronic information alternatives.

Comparative Industry Analysis

To evaluate the potential usage rate for electronic and non-electronic voter delivery alternatives, comparisons to private and public sector models were employed. These delivery models include electronic banking, electronic billing, electronic notification of shareholder proxies and the existing government practice of distributing the State Voter Information Guide. Participation

¹⁰ California Elections Code 13300 and 13303(b).

¹¹ Assembly Bill No. 1717, California Legislature 2009-2010 Regular Session. Effective January 1, 2011, the statute will be California Elections Code 13300.7.

rates and cost savings were identified for each comparative model and applied to the considered alternatives.

Cost Savings Analysis

A sample of 15 counties was utilized to evaluate potential cost savings for each policy alternative. These counties represent a variety of population sizes, account for a large percentage of California voters (59%)¹², and were able to provide the cost information necessary for this research.¹³ As a result, this sample was not randomly selected and the presented cost savings may not be generalized to all California counties. Rather, this sample demonstrates the expected variability in cost savings, dependent on county size, voter acceptance and the alternatives enacted.

To calculate savings, the cost to mail mandatory voter information was determined. The November 2008 General Election sample ballots were selected as a measurement basis because every county, as mandated by law, mails a paper copy to each registered voter. This single mailing served as a conservative measurement tool as the sample ballot packets for a general election are smaller in size and less expensive than the sample ballot packets for a primary election.¹⁴

Counties were asked to provide:

- 1) The total sample ballot cost for the November 2008 sample ballot;
- 2) The number of registered voters for the November 2008 election; and,
- 3) The total county election cost for the November 2008 election.¹⁵

While all counties were able to provide vendor costs,¹⁶ not all counties could report their internal labor costs or translation costs for the sample ballot. Most counties were unable to break down or quantify the costs for tasks such as editing and staff time. Additionally, some counties were unable to report or simply did not incur translation costs. Thus, to minimize variances across counties as much as possible, internal labor and translation costs have been omitted. As a result, cost savings estimates throughout the report are conservative with counties potentially experiencing significantly higher savings than indicated—especially those counties with high translation and internal labor costs.¹⁷

¹² As of May 2010, the 15 county sample accounts for 10,075,911 of the 16,977,031 registered California voters.

¹³ While all counties were asked to report costs, the level of detailed responses was limited and inconsistent. Many counties explained they were unable to provide basic cost information as they were busy preparing for the upcoming June 2010 election. Counties that could provide the most comprehensive responses were selected.

¹⁴ McCormack, Conny. "Former Los Angeles County Elections Director." Telephone interview. 2010.

¹⁵ The total county cost for the November 2008 included recoverable or reimbursed costs by the state or other jurisdictions. This report emphasizes the cost to provide this service to California voters, and does not specifically address who incurs each cost.

¹⁶ Vendor costs include services such as imaging, printing, postage, addressing, mailing, materials and vendor labor.

¹⁷ Sample ballot costs vary considerably across counties on expenses such as the vendor, internal labor and postage. Some counties are responsible for most of the production for their sample ballots and are charged minimally by the vendor. Other counties rely and are charged heavily by the vendor, but face minimal internal labor costs. The cost for postage varies by the weight of booklets and if they were pre-sorted and the cost for translation can be

The cost information, provided primarily by counties through e-mail, enabled a conservative per voter cost estimate for the sample ballot booklet in each county. This estimate was applied to each alternative to determine potential cost savings at various voter participation rates. For alternatives that required voters to change their behavior, and opt-in to accessing information electronically, a sensitivity analysis was used that varied the counties potential cost savings by the percentage of voters who participate in the electronic option. These percentages were determined by the usage rates experienced in comparative industries and varied by alternative.

In addition to the estimated cost savings, the total election cost collected from each county allowed the magnitude of cost savings to be expressed for each alternative. Throughout the analysis, each cost savings estimate is expressed as a percentage of the total county election cost. Appendix D displays the cost information provided by each county.

The estimated cost savings for each alternative information delivery system does not include the administrative costs associated with implementing or maintaining the new alternative. This limitation is discussed within the cost savings analysis of each alternative. Additionally, since the November 2008 election, some counties may have reduced their sample ballot costs by no longer sending sample ballots to vote-by-mail voters.¹⁸ By eliminating such duplication of ballot mail delivery, counties will save even more financial and environmental resources not accounted for in this report.

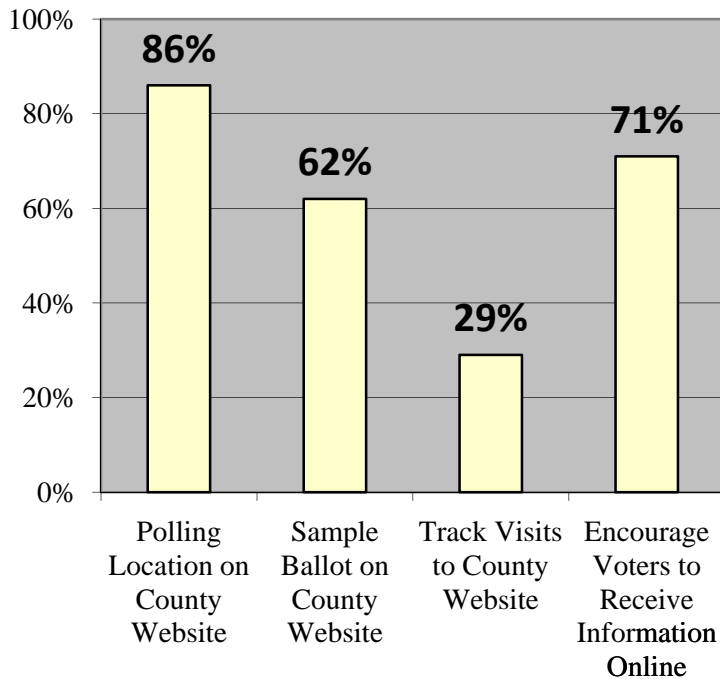
nonexistent in counties like Del Norte, yet tremendous in counties like Los Angeles, who spent over \$4 million for one mailing.

¹⁸ San Luis Obispo has reduced their sample ballot mailing by 50% since 2008.

County Services and Voter Communication

All 58 counties, representing over 16.9 million registered voters,¹⁹ provided information pertaining to their voter registration database and election services.²⁰

Figure 1: California County Website Services



County Website Services

While state voter information must be available online, access to online county voter information varies across counties as demonstrated in Figure 1. Fifty counties provide polling location information on their website,²¹ 36 counties provide sample ballots,²² and only 17 track how frequently their online resources are accessed.²³ Although many counties do not monitor voter use of website services, 41 counties reported encouraging voters to receive information online,²⁴ such as placing the county website address on voter materials and directing callers to the website. Small counties without a website, such as Modoc County, encourage voters to visit the Secretary of State website for information.

¹⁹ Reported in the “May 24, 2010 Report of Registration” on the California’s Secretary of State website.

²⁰ Data was collected through the use of survey, e-mail and telephone communication.

²¹ 50 counties responded “yes” to offering polling locations on their county election website. The sophistication of polling location information varies across county websites; some counties list polling locations while others present “polling location look-up services.”

²² 36 counties answered “yes” to providing a sample ballot on their county elections website.

²³ 17 counties answered “yes” to tracking how often their online information (sample ballots and polling location information) is accessed by the public during an election cycle. This response is limited by the phrasing of the question, as counties could track sample ballots and not polling location information.

²⁴ 41 counties indicated they make efforts to encourage voters to receive information online.

E-mail Addresses in the Voter Registration Database

The use and collection of voter e-mail addresses also varied across counties. While all California counties are required to provide an e-mail address field on the voter registration form,²⁵ completing this field is not required to register to vote,²⁶ nor is the county required to record e-mail addresses into their database. The current state-wide registration database that counties upload voter information to, *CalVoter*, “does not receive or accept voter e-mail information from the county election management systems.”²⁷ The new system, *VoteCal*, will be “required to capture” voter e-mail addresses,²⁸ and may facilitate or make electronic communication easier in the future.

Currently, 42 counties (72%)²⁹ enter e-mail addresses into their voter registration database; however, only 25 counties were able to report the number of registered voters with an e-mail address.³⁰ These 25 counties have e-mail addresses for nearly 1.7 million voters,³¹ as demonstrated in Table 1.

Table 1: Estimated County Voter E-mail Addresses

County	E-mail Addresses	Percent of County Registered Voters
Alpine	206	25%
Butte	23,497	20%
Colusa	300	4%
Contra Costa	98,000	19%
El Dorado	18,000	17%
Fresno	117,000	30%
Humboldt	26,950	35%
Kings	25,356	50%
Lassen	15	0.1%
Los Angeles	758,991	17%
Marin	75,000	50%
Monterey	31,732	20%
Napa	622	0.9%
Nevada	12,911	21%
Placer	64,888	33%
Riverside	4,000	0.5%
San Benito	6,000	25%
San Diego	178,933	13%
San Francisco	90,000	20%
San Luis Obispo	18,000	12%
San Mateo	69,003	20%
Shasta	31,372	33%
Sutter	9,728	25%
Tehama	7,540	25%
Tulare	14,583	10%
Total Recorded E-mail Address	1,681,617	

This table represents 25 of the 58 California counties able to report the amount of registered voters with an e-mail address.

²⁵ California Elections Code 2150 (a) 3, “The affidavit of registration shall show...The affiant’s place of residence, residence telephone number, if furnished, and e-mail address, if furnished.”

²⁶ California Elections Code 2150 (a) 3, “No person shall be denied the right to register because of his or her failure to furnish a telephone number or e-mail address, and shall be so advised on the voter registration card.” The Secretary of State’s *Guide to Voter Registration in California* also clarifies “this is optional information and provided only at the voter’s choice.”

²⁷ Bruce McDannold, Elections Analyst, California Secretary of State, e-mail 2/22/2010.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ 42 counties responded “yes” when asked if they enter voter-provided e-mail addresses into their registration database.

³⁰ Counties, such as Sonoma County, who enter e-mail addresses into their database but were unable to report the number or percent of voters with an e-mail address, explained in their survey response that they simply “don’t have the capability” to search for that information. Merced County has the same inability, clarifying their “current system doesn’t allow exporting of e-mails or reports on e-mails,” but assured they “do record them” in their “records.”

³¹ While many counties were able to provide an exact figure for the number of voters with an e-mail address, others could only provide a percentage. That percentage was applied to the number of registered voters in that specific county, as reported by the county in their survey response. There are limitations to the total number of voter e-mail addresses however, as the percentages provided by some counties are merely an estimate. Additionally, most

E-mail Communication

Thirty-one counties (53%)³² reported e-mail communication with voters. Reasons for e-mail communication fell into four primary categories:³³

- (1) Confirm—e.g., verification of voter information and collection of missing data on the voter registration card.
- (2) Communicate—e.g., communication with military personnel.
- (3) Inform—e.g., notification of election dates and important information.
- (4) Solicit—e.g., recruitment of poll workers.

Marin County, for example, uses e-mail extensively to communicate with military and overseas voters, reporting that “out of about 1,000 overseas voters, about 600 communicate” with them “via e-mail.”³⁴ Before each election, Marin sends these voters the ballot and communicates with them through e-mail to ensure e-mail addresses are current.

Marin has also taken steps to communicate with non-military personnel, such as sending a test e-mail to the voters of San Rafael and Novato. The e-mail solicited little response, however, due to “old or incorrect” e-mail addresses.³⁵ The Registrar of Voters for Marin explained that using e-mail addresses is difficult for counties because entering e-mail addresses “takes more time, the e-mail addresses change, and there is keystroke error.”³⁶

San Francisco is on the forefront of California counties utilizing e-mail communication, sending “eNewsletters” directly to voters using the e-mail addresses “collected from voter registration affidavits.”³⁷ These newsletters “provide election information directly to voters and include links to information on candidates, measures and services” provided by the county. The content is “primarily in English with information in Chinese and Spanish directing recipients to more information in those languages.”³⁸

counties are unable to determine how valid the e-mail addresses are in their database, and there is good reason to believe that many are not valid -- San Francisco, one of a few counties tracking if e-mail addresses are active, was able to determine roughly 58,000 of their 90,000 e-mail addresses are valid. While Modoc County responded to the question, they were excluded as they were unable to provide a figure or percentage, reporting “less than half” of registered voters had an e-mail address.

³² 31 counties expressed e-mail communication with voters.

³³ 18 counties indicated reasons pertaining to the voter registration card, 6 counties indicated reasons pertaining to communicating with military personal, 5 counties reported reasons pertaining to election information and 3 counties reported reasons pertaining to the recruitment of poll workers.

³⁴ Registrar of Voters at Marin County. 12 Apr. 2010.

³⁵ The test e-mail was “a one page newsletter with election information about deadlines. It was in both English and Spanish.” Ibid.

³⁶ While this “difficulty” might be true of all hand-entered voter registration information, the entry error of one character in an e-mail address will render that address unusable; such error may not as strongly impact the delivery of information to a home address.

³⁷ According to the San Francisco Department of Elections, “the department currently has no other means of collecting and updating e-mail addresses.” 19 Apr. 2010.

³⁸ San Francisco Department of Elections. 19 Apr. 2010.

For the November 2008 election, eNewsletters were sent to 58,000 voters on October 7, October 27, and November 25. Information and an example of the eNewsletter with direct responses from voters can be viewed in Appendix E. San Francisco estimates that the eNewsletters have “generated a 17.5% average increase in visits to the Department’s website.”³⁹

Demographics of Electronic Uptake

In addition to the services and technical abilities of county election offices, the acceptance of new information delivery models will depend heavily on the voters Internet access in each county and their desire to obtain information electronically. Recent studies have shown that demographics such as age, income, education, race and ethnicity correlate with an individual’s access to the Internet, acceptance of electronic information alternatives, and likelihood of utilizing electronic government resources or contacting the government for information.

While policy makers at all levels of government are working to fill the gap between those who have Internet access and those who do not,⁴⁰ access varies considerably across these demographic and socioeconomic characteristics.

Additionally, according to the Pew Internet & American Life Project, Internet access is the “single largest predictor of whether a person contacts government.”⁴¹ 66 percent of Internet users have looked for information on a local, state, or federal government website,⁴² and “online Whites” are most likely to report having accessed government information on the Internet.⁴³ Those who contact the government using the Internet are more likely to have broadband connections at home, and to be “better educated and wealthier than those who have not sought out government information online.”⁴⁴ Information-seeking activities are also “more prevalent among users with higher income and education levels, those with more experience online, and those with broadband access at home.”⁴⁵

Acceptance of Electronic Information

Private industries have experienced similar trends, as demonstrated by consumer acceptance of electronic banking technologies. Households that participated in online banking in 2001 had higher incomes and were more likely to be “headed by someone younger than 58, someone who was White, and someone who had at least a bachelor’s degree.”⁴⁶

³⁹ San Francisco Department of Elections. 19 Apr. 2010.

⁴⁰ Public Policy Institute of California’s “Broadband for All? Gaps in California’s Broadband Adoption and Availability.” July 2007.

⁴¹ Horrigan, John. *How Americans Get in Touch With Government*. Rep. Pew Internet & American Life Project, 24 May 2004.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ America's Online Pursuits. Rep. Pew Internet & American Life Project, 2003.

⁴⁴ Horrigan, John. *How Americans Get in Touch With Government*. Rep. Pew Internet & American Life Project, 24 May 2004.

⁴⁵ America's Online Pursuits. Rep. Pew Internet & American Life Project, 2003.

⁴⁶ United States. Federal Reserve. Board’s Division of Consumer and Community Affairs. U.S. Consumers and Electronic Banking, 1995–2003. By Christoslav E. Anguelov, Marianne A. Hilgert, and Jeanne M. Hogarth.

Voter acceptance of electronic alternatives will likely be influenced by the above characteristics and will vary considerably across counties.

For example, San Francisco, San Mateo and Contra Costa counties may be more accepting or willing to adopt electronic alternatives due to their population's high educational attainment and average household income.

The socioeconomic and demographic differences across counties were considered throughout the analysis of each alternative delivery model, and helped estimate appropriate voter participation or acceptance rates for electronic information alternatives.

Policy Alternatives

Private and public sectors have demonstrated there are more efficient and effective methods for transmitting information to consumers than those currently employed for county voter information. Both electronic and non-electronic alternatives have been considered and compared to the current system of voter information delivery in California.

The Current Delivery Method

California currently ensures that every registered voter receives a paper copy of county information mailed to their home. This system costs California millions of dollars every mailing.⁴⁷

Table 2 highlights the estimated cost for each county to send a single

mailing, as represented by the sample ballot for the November 2008 General Election. It should be noted that sample ballot packets for a general election are smaller in size and less expensive than the sample ballot packets for a primary election. Additionally, and as mentioned before, internal county labor and translation costs have been omitted from these provided costs estimates. For these reasons, we expect these cost estimates to be conservative.

Los Angeles, the largest county, spent nearly \$6 million, or approximately 14 percent of their total election cost, to provide sample ballots for registered voters. For these 15 counties, sample ballot costs represent between approximately 11 to 46 percent of total county election costs.

Table 2: Estimated Sample Ballot Costs

November 2008 General Election		
COUNTY	SAMPLE BALLOT COST	PERCENT OF TOTAL ELECTION COST
Amador	\$25,729	20%
Contra Costa	\$931,870	17%
Del Norte	\$19,079	46%
Fresno	\$560,731	29%
Kern	\$291,061	14%
Los Angeles	\$5,949,199	14%
Madera	\$73,202	20%
Riverside	\$636,105	14%
Sacramento	\$454,031	11%
San Diego	\$2,077,839	16%
San Francisco	\$1,312,424	16%
San Luis Obispo	\$115,411	17%
San Mateo	\$426,455	11%
Santa Cruz	\$244,768	16%
Ventura	\$558,477	18%

Source: Each of the above counties reported their total expenditures for the November 2008 General Election and sample ballots; see Appendix D for calculations and additional information.

⁴⁷ County budgets are supported locally and with state funds. For this reason, any reduction in county costs will also influence the amount of state allocation and reimbursement needed. This report emphasizes the cost to provide this service to voters and does not specify who incurs each cost.

In addition to the financial cost, the current practice is also environmentally wasteful, requiring a significant amount of electricity and fossil fuels while increasing carbon dioxide emissions, cutting down trees and producing large amounts of waste and pollution.⁴⁸

Aside from the environmental and financial costs, mailing paper documents requires significant time to develop, print and deliver updated voter information. Under the current system, when counties recognize an error or information needing modification, they must print an additional insert (if found in time) or send out another mass-mailing to voters. These steps delay the receipt of important voter information and expend even more financial and environmental resources.

Finally, while some studies have shown mailing sample ballots and polling location information may increase voter turnout among younger voters, only seven states provide this service to voters, with 14 states instead electing to print sample ballots in newspapers.⁴⁹ Factors such as voter income and education,⁵⁰ election type, candidates and ballot initiatives may have a greater influence on voter turnout.⁵¹

Alternatives

Industries in the private sector have implemented electronic alternatives to the traditional method of information delivery currently utilized by California counties. These industry practices were used to evaluate short and long term electronic alternatives to voter information dissemination:

- 1) Allow voters to opt-out of receiving paper information by mail, and instead elect to:
 - a. *access information online through their county elections website; or,*
 - b. *receive electronic delivery of voter information via e-mail.*
- 2) Change the default option for voter information to an electronic format (website and/or e-mail delivery) and allow voters to opt-in to receiving paper voter information by mail.

In addition to these electronic alternatives, the existing government practice of distributing state voter information in California was evaluated for the following non-electronic alternative:

- 3) Restrict receipt of mailed county voter information to one per household, and not one per registered voter.

Each of the above policy alternatives is modeled after an existing form of information delivery and has been considered as an alternative for California county voter information—only Alternative 1, however, is legally permitted at this time.

Alternative 1 offers two electronic alternatives for providing voter information. Counties can provide voters the option to stop paper delivery and receive a) information online through the

⁴⁸ DeRosa, James. *The Green PDF : Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions One Ream at a Time*. Rep. Global Warming Initiatives, Inc., May 2007.

⁴⁹ Wolfinger, Raymond E., Benjamin Highton, and Megan Mullin. *How Postregistration Laws Affect the Turnout of Registrants*. Rep. Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement, June 2004.

⁵⁰ Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980; Leighley and Nagler 1992; Teixeira 1992; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Ibid.

⁵¹ Tolbert, Caroline J., John A. Grummel, and Daniel A. Smith. *American Politics Research* 29.6 (2001): 625-48. Sage Publications, Nov. 2001.

county elections website and/or b) information in an e-mail delivered to their inbox. These two methods reflect a decision seen frequently in the electronic billing industry (E-billing) to either “pull” the customer to a website or “push” the bill to the customer in an e-mail.⁵²

Alternative 1

A) Allow voters to opt-out of receiving paper information by mail and elect into accessing information online through the county elections website.

Alternative 1A would provide voters the option to cease the delivery of paper voter information to their residence, and instead access information through the county elections website.

Industry Precedent: Online Banking

Retail use of “online banking” provides a helpful model for exploring the potential utilization rates, growth and cost savings associated with replacing paper voter information with online voter information.

Unlike the traditional method of monthly mailed paper bank statements, providing financial summaries online is advantageous for banking customers as their information is accessible anywhere in the world and at anytime.

Online banking is one of the fastest growing Internet activities in America, increasing in participation by 47 percent in a two year time period.⁵³ Approximately 76 percent of U.S. Households use online banking⁵⁴ and according to the 2010 Consumer Billing and Payment Trends Survey, financial institutions have successfully enrolled 80 percent of their Internet-accessible customers with online banking services.⁵⁵ Although households largely receive electronic banking statements and utilize online services to monitor their bank accounts, many still receive a paper copy of their statement in the mail, with only 8 percent of online bankers turning off their paper statements.⁵⁶

⁵² Ellison, Carol. “Paper Cuts.” *CRM Magazine* Aug. 2007: 22-26.

⁵³ According to a survey by the Pew Internet & American Life Project the number of Americans utilizing online banking increased 47% between 2002 and 2004. Fox, Susannah. *Online Banking 2005*. Rep. Pew Internet & American Life Project, Feb. 2005.

⁵⁴ A 2009 survey conducted by Forrester Consulting found that 76% of individuals bank online. These results were consistent with a 2009 report by the Javelin Strategy & Research firm, “Online Banking and Bill Payment Forecast.” *Coping During the Crisis: Customers Turn to Online Banking and*. Rep. Forrester Consulting and CheckFree, Oct. 2008.

⁵⁵ *2010 Consumer Billing and Payment Trends Survey*. Rep. Consumer Insights, Fiserv.

⁵⁶ “Electronic Bill Presentment & Payment—It’s All About Options « Customer Service Benchmarking.” *Customer Service Benchmarking*. 8 Feb. 2009, citing a study by Forrester Research.

Estimated Cost Savings

While participation rates for online banking have grown significantly in recent years, it is unlikely county voting offices would experience equal participation rates in the near future. Online banking allows real-time activities such as checking account balances before making a payment, and paying billers online to save time and postage. These benefits provide an incentive for consumers to change their behavior and switch from paper statements to online monitoring. Online voter information does not provide directly similar incentives.

Online banking incentives may also vary from those of voters due to the sensitivity level of information involved. Some individuals opt-in to online banking because they feel it is more secure than receiving paper statements. Others feel paper statements are more secure as a form of record-keeping, while avoiding online fraud. Mass mailings sent to the registered voters of California however, do not contain similarly sensitive financial information; therefore, California voters will not likely be swayed by security fears, but rather by convenience and personal preferences.

Personal preferences, such as a desire for hard copy materials,⁵⁷ and the appeal and ease of sticking to the status quo are more likely to negatively impact take-up rates for this policy alternative. Studies in behavioral economics suggest that opting out of the traditional paper format delivered directly to the home emphasizes the loss of an option in the mind of many voters, inhibiting their willingness to participate.⁵⁸ Individuals “disproportionately stick with the status quo,” historically having shown a bias for the status quo that is substantial, even in important decisions such as health care coverage.⁵⁹

Still many voters may align with larger social preferences for conserving the environment and decreasing unnecessary waste. In a survey conducted by Javelin Strategy & Research, 44 percent of respondents reported they were motivated to stop receiving paper statements to reduce their impact on the environment through “eliminating paper waste and emissions.”⁶⁰

To project the potential rates at which voters in each county will opt-out of paper delivery and opt-in to online information, the percent of California voters who have accessed state voter information online was assessed. While California does not currently have a system in place to stop the delivery of paper information, they do post the State Voter Information Guide online, which provides necessary election information to voters. In 2008, roughly 5 percent of California voters viewed the State Voter Information Guide posted on the Secretary of State website.⁶¹

⁵⁷ Kurniawan, Sri H., and Panayiotis Zaphiris. *Reading Online or on Paper: Which Is Faster?* Rep. Institute of Gerontology and Dept. of Industrial & Manufacturing Engineering, 2001.

⁵⁸ Johnson, Eric J., Steven Bellman, and Gerald L. Lohse. “Defaults, Framing and Privacy: Why Opting In-Opting Out.” *Marketing Letters* 13.1 (2002): 5-15.

⁵⁹ Samuelson, William, and Richard Zeckhauser. “Status Quo Bias in Decision Making.” *Journal of Risk and Uncertainty* 1.1 (1998): 7+.

⁶⁰ Javelin Strategy & Research. *Green Billing 2010: How to Turn Off More Paper Statements as Consumers Attitudes and Alerts Technologies Change (sample)*. Rep. 2010. *Research and Markets*.

⁶¹ 876,025 absolute unique visitors viewed the Voter Guide (posted 60 days prior to the November 2008 election) on the Secretary of State website. The total amount of visits from September 8, 2008 to November 8, 2008 was 1,232,729. Eight days prior to the November 2008 election, the Secretary of State announced that California had

To project potential cost savings associated with this alternative, 5 percent was utilized as an initial voter participation rate estimate. As the online banking industry has demonstrated, it is expected that voter use of online resources has and will continue to grow. While it is likely voters have become more comfortable and likely to use technology since the November 2008 election, a 5 percent adoption rate serves as an appropriate base estimate as voters would not only need to access information online but also stop the receipt of paper information. It is reasonable to assume that some counties may experience a higher take-up rate than 5 percent, and participation will grow with time. Table 3 projects potential cost savings across counties based on the rate at which voters opt-out of paper information and elect into online information. As previously discussed, participation in this electronic alternative will likely vary by county due to factors such as Internet access and preference for electronic information alternatives.

Table 3: Estimated Cost Savings: Opt-out of Paper Delivery, Website Alternative

11/4/2008 Sample Ballots			Estimated Savings Percent of Total County Election Cost			
COUNTY	REGISTERED VOTERS	COST PER VOTER	5% OPT OUT	10% OPT OUT	15% OPT OUT	20% OPT OUT
Amador	21,462	\$1.20	\$1,288 1%	\$2,575 2%	\$3,863 3%	\$5,151 4%
Contra Costa	539,903	\$1.73	\$46,702 1%	\$93,403 2%	\$140,105 3%	\$186,806 3%
Del Norte	12,681	\$1.50	\$951 2%	\$1,902 5%	\$2,853 7%	\$3,804 9%
Fresno	414,411	\$1.35	\$27,973 1%	\$55,945 3%	\$83,918 4%	\$111,891 6%
Kern	311,139	\$0.94	\$14,624 1%	\$29,247 1%	\$43,871 2%	\$58,494 3%
Los Angeles	4,111,642	\$1.45	\$298,094 1%	\$596,188 1%	\$894,282 2%	\$1,192,376 3%
Madera	54,003	\$1.36	\$3,672 1%	\$7,344 2%	\$11,017 3%	\$14,689 4%
Riverside	838,716	\$0.76	\$31,871 1%	\$63,742 1%	\$95,614 2%	\$127,485 3%
Sacramento	684,588	\$0.66	\$22,591 1%	\$45,183 1%	\$67,774 2%	\$90,366 2%
San Diego	1,488,157	\$1.40	\$104,171 1%	\$208,342 2%	\$312,513 2%	\$416,684 3%
San Francisco	477,651	\$2.75	\$65,677 1%	\$131,354 2%	\$197,031 2%	\$262,708 3%
San Luis Obispo	161,256	\$0.72	\$5,805 1%	\$11,610 2%	\$17,416 3%	\$23,221 3%
San Mateo	389,718	\$1.09	\$21,240 1%	\$42,479 1%	\$63,719 2%	\$84,959 2%
Santa Cruz	148,306	\$1.65	\$12,235 1%	\$24,470 2%	\$36,706 2%	\$48,941 3%
Ventura	425,968	\$1.31	\$27,901 1%	\$55,802 2%	\$83,703 3%	\$111,604 4%

Table 3 provides conservative cost savings estimates across a sample of counties, depending on the number of voters who participate in the online alternative. The magnitude, or percent of total

17,304,091 registered voters. Assuming individuals viewing the voter information guide were voters, 876,025/17,304,091 is approximately 5%. *Google Analytics*. Program Documentation. *Voterguide.sos.ca.gov*. Sep 8, 2008- Nov 8, 2008; California Secretary of State. *Secretary of State Debra Bowen Reports Record Number of Registered Voters in California*. 31 Oct. 2008.

county election cost, also varies, with savings representing between 0 and 9 percent of county election costs. This policy alternative cannot yield the most cost or environmental savings as it depends heavily on the willingness of voters to change their behavior and opt-out of paper delivery. The percentage of willing voters may be estimated using the demographics described earlier.

This alternative may not financially benefit all counties in the short term. Del Norte and Amador counties, for example, do not currently provide sample ballots or polling locations on their websites. Additionally, they have relatively older populations, lower average household incomes and lower educational attainment. As a result, these counties would likely experience a lower take-up rate yielding lower savings.

Administrative costs, such as voter notification, online service user support, and acquiring the technological ability to exclude registered voters from postal mailing lists are not included in the above cost savings.

In addition to these administrative costs, as the volume of paper copies decrease, per-unit printing costs may rise since printing rates generally increase with decreased quantities. This concern however is minimal with respect to this alternative as the sensitivity of per pamphlet cost is relatively trivial, with many counties charged at a per-thousand-copies rate.

B) Allow voters to opt-out of receiving paper information by mail and elect into electronic delivery of voter information to a voter-supplied e-mail address.

This alternative offers voters the option to cease delivery of paper voter information to their residence and instead receive information at the e-mail address supplied by the voter.

Industry Precedent: Electronic Billing

Electronic billing (E-billing) offers a useful model for evaluating an e-mail based information delivery system that could enable California counties to reduce the costly printing and mail delivery of voter information.

Consumers enrolling in electronic billing may stop paper bill delivery and instead receive an e-mail notification with an invoice or website link to a biller direct site. Either e-mail notification method delivers information directly to the customer's inbox, removing the burden of searching a general site for information, while eliminating the delivery of paper statements.

Research has shown that "customers are more likely to turn-off paper bills if they receive an electronic equivalent directly into their e-mail inbox."⁶² This preference will likely hold true for voters as well, who prefer the direct delivery of information previously provided to them by mail. As one electronic billing provider notes, "the problem is that for most customers, it is still more convenient to receive paper documents by mail," than by website searches.⁶³ E-mail

⁶² Citing Cathy Graeber (Forrester, 2005). "Paper Suppression Initiatives with Paperless Billing & EBPP." [Http://www.striata.com/](http://www.striata.com/). Striata: Secure, Electronic Document Delivery.

⁶³ "Paper Suppression Initiatives with Paperless Billing & EBPP." Striata: Secure, Electronic Document Delivery.

delivery is also more opportune as the average Internet user spends 87 percent of time online handling e-mail,⁶⁴ with “25 percent of inbox e-mail comprised of opt-in messages.”⁶⁵

A 2009 survey by the Javelin Strategy and Research firm found that 70 percent of households paid a bill online in the previous month.⁶⁶ While the percentage of Americans who pay and receive bills online is growing, customer adoption of *paperless* bills on average is relatively low—approximately 9.6 percent.⁶⁷ While some billers have had paperless adoption rates of over 30 percent,⁶⁸ between 60 and 95 percent of online bill payers still receive a mailed paper copy.⁶⁹ In 2008, the U.S. Post Office mailed 3.6 billion credit card bills, 2.7 billion utility bills, 2.3 billion insurance company bills and 2 billion telephone bills.⁷⁰

BillTrust, a company that provides outsourced corporate billing services, estimates companies spend between \$1.25 and \$2.25 “for every paper bill sent,”⁷¹ with postage alone representing about 38 percent of the cost.⁷² Switching to electronic bill pay reduces print and postage costs by 60-90 percent⁷³ and these savings can total \$13.1 million annually for a large company sending invoices to consumers⁷⁴ and translate to billions of dollars in savings nationally.

Although the level of cost savings depends heavily on the take-up rate for opting-out of the paper delivery of bills, business-to-consumer billers can achieve returns on their investment with as little as a 9 percent adoption rate⁷⁵—a rate some industries have already surpassed.

⁶⁴ Citing Jupiter Research 2007, part of Forrester Research. “E-mail Statistics.” *E-mail Marketing Newsletters Green Solutions PowerPro Direct*.

⁶⁵ Survey by Jupiter Research, part of Forrester Research. Lukovitz, Karlene. “Social Networking, Texting, Cell Phones Impact E-mail Effectiveness.” *MediaPost News*. 5 Aug. 2008.

⁶⁶ Schwanhausser, Mark. 2009 Online Banking and Bill Payment Forecast. Rep. Javelin Strategy & Research, Aug. 2009.

⁶⁷ A fall 2009 survey of North American utility companies found 9.6 percent of North American utility accounts are now paperless—a 35 percent increase since their 2007 survey. E-Source. *E Source Announces Results from E-Business Metrics Survey*. Key Findings from the 2009 E-Business Metrics Survey, 4 Mar. 2010.

⁶⁸ In the 2009 survey of North American utility companies, three utilities reported adoption rates of over 20%, and the highest paperless billing adoption rate was 30.2 percent. These results were consistent with a January 2007 survey, conducted by Harris Interactive and the Marketing Workshop, which found that “Thirty-nine percent of consumers receiving electronic bills at bank websites said they no longer receive mailed copies of the bills.”*Ibid.*; Harris Interactive and the Marketing Workshop, 14 July 2009.

⁶⁹ A January 2007 survey, conducted by Harris Interactive and the Marketing Workshop, found that “Thirty-nine percent of consumers receiving electronic bills at bank websites said they no longer receive mailed copies of the bills.” *Online Bill Payments Surpass Checks for the First Time Among Internet- Connected Households. 2007 Consumer Bill Payment Trends Survey: Volume of Electronic Bill Payments*; Harris Interactive and the Marketing Workshop, 14 July 2009.

⁷⁰ Mazzone, John, and John Pickett. “The Household Diary Study Mail Use & Attitudes in FY 2008.” *USPS - The United States Postal Service (U.S. Postal Service)*.

⁷¹ “That includes about 60 cents in paper, printing costs, envelopes, and postage; an estimated 15 cents in wages and benefits paid to the employees who work to mail them out; and 50 cents to \$1.50 per bill for return handling, posting payment checks, and taking the money to the bank.” Ellison, Carol. “Paper Cuts.” *CRM Magazine* Aug. 2007: 22-26.

⁷² Fitzgerald, Kate. “Going Paperless: Virtual Statements Help Issuers Cut Billing Costs.” *PaymentsSource*. 26 Oct. 2009.

⁷³ “Paper Suppression Initiatives with Paperless Billing & EBPP.” *Striata: Secure, Electronic Document Delivery*.

⁷⁴ Gartner, Inc. *Gartner Says E-Billing Can Save Companies Millions Per Year*. *Gartner.com*. 6 June 2002.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

Wireless phone companies, for example, have been trailblazers in encouraging customers to go paperless. A 2010 study by the Javelin Strategy & Research firm found that in 2009, "...29% of consumers had shut off paper statements for their mobile bill, up from 17% in 2007."⁷⁶ High take-up rates, however, might be the result of fees associated with receiving paper bills, financial incentives to switch to paperless⁷⁷ and a consumer base that is more tech-friendly.

Motivation for opting in or out of paperless billing may also be influenced by a desire to protect financial security or the environment.

Some bill recipients feel electronic billing is more secure than having paper statements sent to their home, while others feel paper bills are more secure and ensure payments are not missed. These financial motivations for delivery preference will not be a factor for California voters who receive general election information.

Environmental concerns however, will likely sway some voters to enroll. In a 2010 survey, 58 percent of electronic billing and payment users said the environment was "important or very important" in their decision to activate and utilize e-services.⁷⁸ The most important reasons cited in the survey included saving paper (85%), trees (81%) and landfill space (71%).⁷⁹ A 2003 study by the Javelin Strategy & Research firm found that if all bills were viewed and paid online, 18.5 million trees would be saved, the nation's landfills would be spared 800,000 tons of solid waste per year and some 2.2 billion tons of green house gases would not be released into the air.⁸⁰

In addition to environmental benefits, e-billers overall have found online billing services more satisfactory than traditional paper methods. Across a variety of industries, such as utilities and mortgage companies, J.D. Power and Associates have reported that the overall satisfaction score of customers who receive electronic bills is significantly higher compared to the average paper billing customer.⁸¹

Estimated Cost Savings

Counties *able* to provide an e-mail service alternative will likely experience higher participation rates among voters than by simply posting information online (Alternative 1A). The e-mail delivery alternative provides information directly to the voter's inbox and removes the burden of searching a website for information. While counties may not initially experience the average adoption rate of paperless billing (9.6 percent), they will likely experience a slightly higher

⁷⁶ Javelin Strategy & Research. *Green Billing 2010: How to Turn Off More Paper Statements as Consumers Attitudes and Alerts Technologies Change (sample)*. Rep. 2010. *Research and Markets*.

⁷⁷ "AT&T, Sprint Nextel and Verizon Wireless all charge \$1 to \$1.50 per page for bills itemizing calls sent and received. And Sprint has offered customers a \$5 credit for "going green" by opting for paperless bills." Fitzgerald, Kate. "Going Paperless: Virtual Statements Help Issuers Cut Billing Costs." *PaymentsSource*. 26 Oct. 2009.

⁷⁸ Leiserson, Eric. *2010 Billing Household Survey: Consumer Survey of Offline and Online Billing and Payment Practices*. Rep. Fiserv.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ Dyke, James Van. *Why Electronic Billing and Banking Is Good for the Nation's Environmental Health*. Rep. Javelin Strategy & Research; Ellison, Carol. "Paper Cuts." *CRM Magazine* Aug. 2007: 22-26.

⁸¹ Wisniowski, Charles. "J.D. Power: SunTrust Mortgage Ranks Tops in Customer Satisfaction." *AllBusiness.com*. 1 Sept. 2005; "J.D. Power and Associates Reports: Satisfaction With Electric Utility Companies Increases Despite Volatile Energy Prices and Sluggish Economy." *Istockanalyst.com*. 17 July 2008.

acceptance rate than 5 percent, as some counties already email a significant portion of their voter population.

Marin County, who has e-mail addresses for roughly 50 percent of their registered voters, currently communicates with 60 percent of their overseas voters via e-mail. San Francisco County also e-mails voters, sending election information to over 12 percent of their registered voter population in 2008.⁸²

Table 4 projects potential cost savings across counties at various voter participation levels, beginning at 6 percent. As seen in the electronic billing industry, participation will likely grow in time and will vary by county due to factors such as Internet access, acceptance of electronic information alternatives, and likelihood of utilizing electronic government resources.

Table 4: Estimated Cost Savings: Opt-out of Paper Delivery, E-mail Alternative

11/4/2008 Sample Ballots		Estimated Savings Percent of Total County Election Cost			
COUNTY	REGISTERED VOTERS	6% OPT OUT	12% OPT OUT	18% OPT OUT	24% OPT OUT
Amador	21,462	\$1,545 1%	\$3,091 2%	\$4,636 4%	\$6,181 5%
Contra Costa	539,903	\$56,042 1%	\$112,084 2%	\$168,126 3%	\$224,168 4%
Del Norte	12,681	\$1,141 3%	\$2,283 6%	\$3,424 8%	\$4,565 11%
Fresno	414,411	\$33,567 2%	\$67,135 3%	\$100,702 5%	\$134,269 7%
Kern	311,139	\$17,548 1%	\$35,096 2%	\$52,645 3%	\$70,193 3%
Los Angeles	4,111,642	\$357,713 1%	\$715,426 2%	\$1,073,139 3%	\$1,430,851 3%
Madera	54,003	\$4,407 1%	\$8,813 2%	\$13,220 4%	\$17,627 5%
Riverside	838,716	\$38,245 1%	\$76,491 2%	\$114,736 3%	\$152,982 3%
Sacramento	684,588	\$27,110 1%	\$54,219 1%	\$81,329 2%	\$108,439 3%
San Diego	1,488,157	\$125,005 1%	\$250,010 2%	\$375,016 3%	\$500,021 4%
San Francisco	477,651	\$78,812 1%	\$157,625 2%	\$236,437 3%	\$315,250 4%
San Luis Obispo	161,256	\$6,966 1%	\$13,933 2%	\$20,899 3%	\$27,865 4%
San Mateo	389,718	\$25,488 1%	\$50,975 1%	\$76,463 2%	\$101,950 3%
Santa Cruz	148,306	\$14,682 1%	\$29,365 2%	\$44,047 3%	\$58,729 4%
Ventura	425,968	\$33,481 1%	\$66,962 2%	\$100,443 3%	\$133,924 4%

Similar to Alternative 1A, this policy alternative also does not yield the most cost or environmental savings as it depends heavily on the willingness of voters to change their behavior and initiate this option. The percentage of willing voters may be estimated using the

⁸² For the November 2008 election, eNewsletters were sent to 58,000 voters on October 7, October 27, and November 25. San Francisco Department of Elections. 19 Apr. 2010.

demographics described earlier. A county such as San Francisco, for example, with a high educational attainment and earnings average, may experience a strong participation among voters. As discussed earlier, in 2008, San Francisco sent election information to over 12 percent of their registered voters. In the future, if these e-mailed voters could stop the delivery of paper information, approximately \$160,000 could be saved as well as over 57,000 paper booklets.

Even at a more expected take-up rate (6 percent), a large county such as Los Angeles, who has voter e-mail addresses for approximately 17 percent of their registered voters, could realize savings of over \$350,000 for one direct mailing, and eliminate the production of almost 250,000 paper copies.

These savings do not include the administrative costs associated with providing this alternative, such as voter notification, enrollment promotion, increased internal labor to manage and maintain electronic voter e-mail information, online service user support, and acquiring the technological ability to exclude registered voters from postal mailing lists. In addition to these administrative costs, as the volume of paper copies decrease, per-unit printing costs may rise as printing rates generally increase with decreased quantities. These changes in per-printing costs may be relatively minimal for this alternative, as counties are typically charged at a per-thousand copies rate.

The challenge is developing the ability for California counties to institute this alternative, which will depend heavily on their ability to collect and maintain their constituents current e-mail addresses.⁸³ While 72 percent of surveyed counties enter e-mail addresses into their system, only 53 percent have attempted e-mail communication. In the future it is expected that the volume of recorded e-mail addresses will increase, both due to the growing prevalence of e-mail use and the anticipated introduction of the *VoteCal Statewide Voter Registration Project*—a new system that will capture e-mail addresses from each county.

In the short term, however, due to administrative costs, Alternative 1A may not financially benefit all counties. Some counties, such as Amador, who lack the needed technological infrastructure and constituents likely to opt-in to electronic options, may not experience sufficient cost savings by offering this alternative. Amador, similar to 16 other counties, does not currently enter e-mail addresses into their voter registration database. Additionally, they have a relatively older population, lower average household income and lower educational attainment. As a result, Amador would likely experience a lower than average take-up rate and any savings would unlikely equal the administrative costs of implementing an e-mail capture and delivery system.

Los Angeles, Marin, Tehama and San Francisco counties already send election information to voters via e-mail and may readily implement e-mail delivery and experience cost savings.

While requiring more of an effort for counties than simply posting information online, electronic delivery may increase voter satisfaction and adoption of electronic information. Over time, e-mail adoption will increase as voters accept an already familiar method of accessing information.

⁸³ Over time voter email addresses could change causing emailed information to bounce back and not reach the voter. One way counties could overcome this challenge would be to automatically mail voter information if e-mail communication is unsuccessful.

Increased take-up rates, combined with the multiple mailings required of counties, will provide considerable cost and environmental savings for some election offices.

Instituting Policy Alternative 1

Alternative 1 explores two approved methods for providing voter information that is more efficient than the status quo. Employing either of these electronic mediums allow county elections offices to change or update voter information instantaneously and at no additional financial or environmental cost.

In addition to efficiency, Alternative 1 is also equitable across both delivery models. This policy alternative merely provides an *option* for registered voters and does not mandate any change to the receipt of voter information. Because the default method has not changed and voters can continue to receive information as they previously had, this alternative maintains an equitable system of information delivery, with each voter having equal access to information.⁸⁴

Although previously limited by language in the California Elections Code, Alternative 1 is now a legal alternative that counties can employ beginning in 2011.

Finally, it is not expected that Alternative 1 will lower voter participation rates, as only those who want to receive information electronically will do so; however, it may increase voter turnout, by better informing voters through increasing the methods available to consume information.

As recognized by comparative industry experts, “the primary challenge today in realizing cost reductions is not in the logistics of replacing paper with online...but in building customer adoption of paper turn-off strategies.”⁸⁵ To encourage voters to enroll in paperless voter information options, county election offices can apply tactics employed by industries such as electronic billers. These strategies include:

- 1) Printing reminders of electronic options on all mailed information, inserts, and envelopes;
- 2) Promoting electronic voter information options prominently on the website and on election offices telephone on-hold messages;
- 3) Training customer service representatives to refer customers to the website or encourage electronic delivery of information; and
- 4) Asking new voters for e-mail addresses, and if they would like to receive information via e-mail during the voter registration process.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ While all voters continue to have the same access to voter information as previously provided, one might argue this alternative is less equitable as voters without home access to the internet or e-mail services have less options for consuming information than others.

⁸⁵ “Paper Suppression Initiatives with Paperless Billing & EBPP.” Striata: Secure, Electronic Document Delivery.

⁸⁶ Electronic bill presentment and payment promotion strategies. *Billing & Payment Options: Driving Customers Paperless*. Rep. The Ascent Group, Inc., 2009.

Alternative 2: Change the default option for voter information to an electronic format (electronic delivery and/or website) and allow voters to opt-in to receiving voter information by mail.

This policy alternative incorporates both delivery options within Alternative 1, changing the default distribution of county voter information to an electronic format while mailing paper copies only at the request of voters. While not legal under current law, this electronic alternative has been utilized in other industries and government agencies and could be a considered alternative for voter information in the future.

Industry Precedent: Electronic Notification of Shareholder Proxies

The delivery of proxy materials to shareholders presents a useful model for exploring the potential utilization rates and cost savings associated with changing the default method of delivering voter information to an electronic format.

In 2007, the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) established procedures to utilize the Internet as a reliable and cost-efficient method for making corporate information or proxy materials available to shareholders.⁸⁷ By 2009, companies were presented with essentially three options to notify investors and comply with SEC regulations:

- 1) Notice only—send shareholders a notice that the materials are available online;⁸⁸
- 2) Full set delivery—deliver the required notice of Internet availability along with a full set of proxy materials; or,
- 3) Combinations of both—deliver the required notice of Internet availability and provide paper or an electronic copy of proxy materials to a target audience of shareholders (based on zip codes, voting habits, etc).⁸⁹

The notice and access proxy rules require all issuers to “post their proxy materials on an Internet Web site and provide a Notice of Internet Availability of Proxy Materials to shareholders.”⁹⁰ Proxy materials and the Notice may be sent electronically or by mail.⁹¹ Additionally, issuers must deliver a full set of proxy materials upon request by the shareholder, at no charge.⁹²

⁸⁷ Amendments to Rules Requiring Internet Availability of Proxy Materials, 75 Federal Register § 17 CFR Parts 230 and 240 (2010). Print.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ *Notice and Access: Statistical Overview of Use with Beneficial Shareholders*. Rep. Broadridge Financial Solutions, Inc., 30 June 2009; Kentouris, Chris. “Proxy Voting Drops Dramatically Online.” *Securities Industry News*. 8 Feb. 2010; “Proxy Statements: Electronic and Internet Delivery.” U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission.

⁹⁰ Amendments to Rules Requiring Internet Availability of Proxy Materials, 75 Federal Register § 17 CFR Parts 230 and 240 (2010).

⁹¹ See Appendix E for an example of a shareholder notification e-mail. “Are Your Proxy Materials Easily Accessible Online? Reviewing SEC Proxy Rules.” *Public Company Advisor* (Dec. 2009). Holtz Rubenstein Reminick;

⁹² *Notice and Access: Statistical Overview of Use with Beneficial Shareholders*. Rep. Broadridge Financial Solutions, Inc., 30 June 2009.

Many issuers quickly opted to change their default system for shareholder information delivery. According to Broadridge Financial Solutions, Inc., over 1,300 corporate issuers used the notice-only option in the 2009 proxy season,⁹³ and since July 2007, this option was utilized in 2,016 distributions, resulting in savings (net of fees) of \$382 million.⁹⁴ The SEC recently noted however that while issuers have experienced “significant cost savings in printing, postage and processing fees,” statistics indicate a lower shareholder response rate with the notice-only option.⁹⁵

A recent study by Broadridge indicated that the number of retail shareholders in 2008 who voted after receiving a notification of access was down nearly half from the prior year, before adopting the notice-only option.⁹⁶ These results are problematic for companies who need quorums to conduct business and want to ensure shareholders’ interests are represented.

In February 2010, the SEC amended the strict language requirements initially mandated on the notification cards, allowing issuers to better explain the process of accessing information online and voting, with the intent of improving voter turnout.

Although less likely to vote, shareholders have generally accepted this new system of electronic information, with few requesting a supplementary paper copy of proxy materials. This level of acceptance is not surprising as studies in behavioral economics indicate that presenting a default option frequently determines what outcome is chosen.⁹⁷ Even when the default option is randomly assigned, “the presence of one option as the status quo seems to inflate its attractiveness.”⁹⁸ A 2001 study by Madrian and Shea showed an increase in the participation of a retirement plan (from 49 percent to 86 percent) “when participation became the default.”⁹⁹

An example of this behavior can be seen in a case study of Citizens, Inc., in which Computershare Investor Services mailed notices of online access to 13,398 domestic shareholders and only 82, or 0.6 percent, requested mailed paper copies.¹⁰⁰

⁹³ Cited in the “Background and Overview of the Amendments” section of Amendments to Rules Requiring Internet Availability of Proxy Materials, 75 Federal Register § 17 CFR Parts 230 and 240 (2010).

⁹⁴ *Notice and Access: Statistical Overview of Use with Beneficial Shareholders*. Rep. Broadridge Financial Solutions, Inc., 30 June 2009.

⁹⁵ Amendments to Rules Requiring Internet Availability of Proxy Materials, 75 Federal Register § 17 CFR Parts 230 and 240 (2010).

⁹⁶ 34.3% voted in 2007 (without receiving notice only information) and 16.6% voted on average in 2008 with the notice only system. Other factors besides the change in notification may have contributed to this decline. Holbrook, Dane A., and Christina L. Novack. “The Dawn of E-Proxy Compliance: Helping Issuers Understand Their Delivery Options.” *Bloomberg Corporate Law Journal* 3 (2008): 638-47.

⁹⁷ Samuelson and Zeckhauser 1988, Johnson, Bellman and Lohse 2000, Madrian and Shea 2001.

⁹⁸ Citing Samuelson and Zeckhauser’s study “Status Quo Bias in Decision Making” in Johnson, Eric J., Steven Bellman, and Gerald L. Lohse. “Defaults, Framing and Privacy: Why Opting In-Opting Out.” *Marketing Letters* 13.1 (2002): 5-15.

⁹⁹ Citing Madrian and Shea’s “The Power of Suggestion: Inertia 401(k) Participation and Savings Behavior” in Johnson, Eric J., Steven Bellman, and Gerald L. Lohse. “Defaults, Framing and Privacy: Why Opting In-Opting Out.” *Marketing Letters* 13.1 (2002): 5-15.

¹⁰⁰ “Achieving Cost Savings through Targeted Notice and Access: A Case Study of Citizens, Inc.” *Computershare - Thought Centric*. 2009.

This take-up rate is consistent with other findings, such as the 0.73 percent of shareholders between July 1, 2007 and January 31, 2008 who received a notice of online access by Broadridge and then requested a paper copy.¹⁰¹

Estimated Cost Savings

While issuers have experienced significant cost savings and few requests for hard copy materials, it is unlikely that county election offices would experience the exact same results in the near future as voter and investor demographics differ. Additionally, their incentive to vote in a general election might differ from proxy voting. However, even if the number of voter requests for paper copies were twenty-times that of shareholders, the result would still mean substantial savings.

Using November 2008 sample ballot data, Table 5 projects different levels of cost savings based on the percentage of voters across counties that may choose to stay with the default option of receiving information electronically and do not request a supplemental paper copy.

Table 5: Estimated Cost Savings: Electronic Default Alternative

11/4/2008 SAMPLE BALLOT		ESTIMATED SAVINGS PERCENT OF TOTAL COST			
STAY WITH DEFAULT					
COUNTY	REGISTERED VOTERS	COST PER VOTER	80% OF VOTERS	90% OF VOTERS	99% OF VOTERS
Amador	21,462	\$1.20	\$20,604 16%	\$23,179 18%	\$ 25,497 20%
Contra Costa	539,903	\$1.73	\$747,226 14%	\$840,629 16%	\$924,692 17%
Del Norte	12,681	\$1.50	\$15,217 37%	\$17,119 42%	\$18,831 46%
Fresno	414,411	\$1.35	\$447,564 23%	\$503,509 26%	\$553,860 29%
Kern	311,139	\$0.94	\$233,977 12%	\$263,244 13%	\$289,546 14%
Los Angeles	4,111,642	\$1.45	\$4,769,505 12%	\$5,365,693 13%	\$5,902,262 14%
Madera	54,003	\$1.36	\$58,755 16%	\$66,100 18%	\$72,710 20%
Riverside	838,716	\$0.76	\$509,939 10%	\$573,682 13%	\$631,050 14%
Sacramento	684,588	\$0.66	\$361,462 9%	\$406,645 10%	\$447,310 11%
San Diego	1,488,157	\$1.40	\$1,666,736 13%	\$1,875,078 14%	\$2,062,586 16%
San Francisco	477,651	\$2.75	\$1,050,832 13%	\$1,182,186 14%	\$1,300,405 15%
San Luis Obispo	161,256	\$0.72	\$92,883 14%	\$104,494 16%	\$114,943 17%
San Mateo	389,718	\$1.09	\$339,834 9%	\$382,313 10%	\$420,545 11%
Santa Cruz	148,306	\$1.65	\$195,764 13%	\$220,234 15%	\$242,258 16%
Ventura	425,968	\$1.31	\$446,414 14%	\$502,216 16%	\$552,438 18%

¹⁰¹ Broadridge found that 0.45 percent of shareholders requested a full set of proxy materials through March 31, 2008, and 0.85 percent through April 30, 2008. Additionally, "only about 1% of shareholders who received a Notice requested a full, hard copy set of proxy materials." Broadridge, *Notice & Access - A Model of Choice*. Rep. 2008; Holbrook, Dane A., and Christina L. Novack. "The Dawn of E-Proxy Compliance: Helping Issuers Understand Their Delivery Options." *Bloomberg Corporate Law Journal* 3 (2008): 638-47.

It is easier for voters to take no action at all and still have information delivered to them. For this reason, changing the default option would yield the highest level of cost savings and greatest environmental impact because it requires voters to be proactive to keep services the same.

If 20 percent of county voters do not stay with the default, and request a paper copy from their county election office (a rate which is extremely high compared to requests for shareholder proxies) large counties can yield savings in the millions and small counties in the tens of thousands of dollars, for a single mailing. In Riverside County for example, if 80 percent of voters receive information electronically, the county could save over half a million dollars, or roughly 10 percent of their election budget—in just one mailing. At greater acceptance rates, San Francisco, Los Angeles and San Diego would save in the millions, or roughly 14 to 16 percent of their election costs.

These savings do not take into account the cost of maintaining the website and/or e-mail delivery system, the cost to notify voters of online access or to enroll them in e-mail delivery. While sending notification of online access will certainly incur printing and postage costs, the upfront cost of notification postcards would be minimal compared to the long term cost of mailing packets of information to voters. San Francisco, for example, mailed a voter information packet more than 270 pages long in the 2008 election cycle.

While the decreased printing will result in considerable environmental and cost savings, it is possible that some of these costs will simply be transferred to voters or their employers. Individuals who prefer hard copy information and do not take the appropriate steps to request delivery may print the documents themselves at home or at their place of work.

As demonstrated by changes to the delivery of shareholder proxies, the change to an all electronic method of delivery could impact voter participation. Although studies have been mixed as to the impact of voting information on turnout, any shift in information distribution has the potential to change voter behavior and we don't conclusively know how any such change would ultimately affect such outcomes.

In addition, shifting to an all-electronic format would have a disparate impact on voters without reliable Internet access or willingness to access information online. These voters would have to take extra steps to ensure they receive their voter information, and if they are unwilling, they will not likely have the information necessary to vote.

These concerns however, have not stopped other government agencies, such as the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), from terminating the paper delivery of important information. Beginning in 2011, the IRS will stop mailing instructions and paper forms for annual income tax returns—saving the agency about \$10 million a year.¹⁰² This policy shift may be due to an increase in online tax filing. Since 1990, the IRS has processed nearly 1 billion e-filed taxed returns, and in 2010 alone, 96 million individuals filed their tax returns electronically.¹⁰³

¹⁰² O'Keefe, Ed. "IRS to Stop Mailing Income Tax Forms." *Washingtonpost.com*. 27 Sept. 2010.

¹⁰³ For taxpayers still wanting to file paper returns, the IRS will make paper copies of instructions and forms available at local IRS Taxpayer Assistance Centers, post offices and libraries, and will also post it online. Department of the Treasury. Internal Revenue Service. *Notice 1400: Tax Package Information for Individuals*. Sept. 2010; and, O'Keefe, Ed. "IRS to Stop Mailing Income Tax Forms." *Washingtonpost.com*. 27 Sept. 2010.

California has not experienced similarly high participation rates for electronic voter information—largely because electronic alternatives have not previously been available as a substitute to paper. As electronic alternatives become more available and utilized by voters, California could more easily shift to an all electronic information delivery system.

Alternative 3: Restrict receipt of mailed county voter information to one per household, and not one per registered voter.

If paper delivery remains, counties should restrict the delivery of voter information to one copy per household instead of one per registered voter.

Industry Precedent: Existing Government Process of Disseminating the State Voter Information Guide

The California Secretary of State office provides a helpful model to evaluate the expected cost savings associated with reducing the volume of mailings to California voters. While counties are required to mail voter information to each registered voter, the Secretary of State is only required to mail information to each registered household. According to the California Elections Code, the Secretary of State must mail one copy of state voter information to each registered voter at the postal address stated on their voter registration affidavit. If two or more registered voters have the *same* postal address, the Secretary of State only needs to mail one copy.¹⁰⁴

Other government organizations and private industries have also opted to limit sending information to one per household. Issuers communicating with shareholders may send a single copy of the Notice to Access to “multiple shareholders who reside at the same residence.”¹⁰⁵ This same strategy has been implemented with important government information, such as the U.S. Census forms.

For the November 2008 General Election, 17,304,091 Californian’s were registered to vote and State Voter Information Guides were mailed to approximately 10,200,000 households.¹⁰⁶ By reducing the distribution of voter information to one guide per registered household, as opposed to one per voter, the state reduces costs, energy, paper use and waste, while decreasing its mailing by approximately 41 percent.

Cost Savings

To estimate the cost savings associated with reducing county voter information to one per registered household, the number of registered households per county that received the state

¹⁰⁴ California Elections Code 9094(a).

¹⁰⁵ Holbrook, Dane A., and Christina L. Novack. “The Dawn of E-Proxy Compliance: Helping Issuers Understand Their Delivery Options.” *Bloomberg Corporate Law Journal* 3 (2008): 638-47.

¹⁰⁶ Eight days prior to the November 2008 election, the Secretary of State announced that California had 17,304,091 registered voters. California Secretary of State. *Secretary of State Debra Bowen Reports Record Number of Registered Voters in California*. 31 Oct. 2008. Mailing data provided by the Ballot Pamphlet and Initiative Program Manger at the California Secretary of State’s Office. 26 Mar. 2010.

voter information guide for the November 2008 election was used. Table 6 projects these potential savings by exploring one sample ballot per registered household for the November 2008 General Election.

Table 6: Estimated Cost Savings: One Mailing per Household Alternative

11/4/2008 GENERAL ELECTION				ESTIMATE		
COUNTY	REGISTERED VOTERS	REGISTERED HOUSEHOLDS ¹⁰⁷	COST PER VOTER	REDUCTION IN SAMPLE BALLOTS	COST SAVINGS	PERCENT OF TOTAL ELECTION COST
Amador	21,462	12,278	\$1.20	9,184	\$11,021	8%
Contra Costa	539,903	288,149	\$1.73	25,1754	\$ 435,534	8%
Del Norte	12,681	7,746	\$1.50	4,935	\$ 7,403	18%
Fresno	414,411	211,208	\$1.35	203,203	\$ 274,324	14%
Kern	311,139	175,057	\$0.94	136,082	\$ 127,917	6%
Los Angeles	4,111,642	2,511,247	\$1.45	1,600,395	\$ 2,320,573	6%
Madera	54,003	30,510	\$1.36	23,493	\$ 31,950	9%
Riverside	838716	467,082	\$0.76	371,634	\$ 282,442	6%
Sacramento	684,588	381,660	\$0.66	302,928	\$ 199,932	5%
San Diego	1,488,157	840,395	\$1.40	647,762	\$ 906,867	7%
San Francisco	477,651	288,158	\$2.75	189,493	\$ 521,106	6%
San Luis Obispo	161,256	88,803	\$0.72	72,453	\$ 52,166	8%
San Mateo	389,718	208,090	\$1.09	181,628	\$ 197,975	5%
Santa Cruz	148,306	81,625	\$1.65	66,681	\$ 110,024	7%
Ventura	425,968	227,891	\$1.31	198,077	\$ 259,481	8%

By sending a single mailing to each registered household, a large county such as Los Angeles could save over \$2 million and eliminate the production of over 1.6 million paper booklets. Even a small county, such as Amador, could save over \$10,000 and eliminate the production of over 9,000 paper booklets. The relative magnitude of cost savings in terms of total election cost is also high, ranging from 5 to 18 percent across these counties.

The administrative costs to implement this alternative would be minimal; however, the printing cost per mailing would likely increase as the total amount of sample ballots required decreases. The increased per-pamphlet cost has not been estimated.

Savings would also depend on the type of election. For a primary election, households with voters registered for more than one political party would require separate packets of information.

¹⁰⁷ "Registered Households" represents the number of households with one or more registered voters (per county) that received the State Voter Information Guide for the November 2008 General Election. Deputy Secretary of State for Communications at California Secretary of State's Office. 27 Sept. 2010.

Additionally, counties currently rely on the sample ballot mailing to enroll voters in their vote-by-mail alternative. Each mailed sample ballot has an application for voters to enroll in the program. These applications contain a unique voter identification number. By changing the sample ballot to one per household instead of one per voter, counties may need to modify this process, such as increasing the number of unique voter applications per sample ballot.

Finally, this policy alternative may be slightly less equitable than the current one per voter delivery system, as voters who live alone may have greater access and an increased likelihood of seeing the information than those who share voting materials with others. It is possible that those who share may be less likely to vote or be less informed when casting a ballot. This alternative, however, has been equitable enough for the dissemination of state voter information, and would likely pass equity standards at the local level and legal challenge at that state level.

While this alternative does not take advantage of available technologies, nor increase the efficiency of information delivery, it is administratively feasible, reduces costs, positively impacts the environment and could be implemented alongside an electronic alternative.

Combining Alternative 3 and Alternative 1

While Alternative 3 results in significant cost savings, more savings could be achieved by implementing it with the electronic alternatives explored in Alternative 1. This combination would reduce mailed information to one copy per household and allow households to opt out of paper delivery.

Household adoption of paperless delivery, however, presents more challenges to implement among households with more than one voter. Counties must ensure all registered voters in a household agree to the electronic option; consequently, those who live alone would be most capable to opt out of receiving paper copies.

For the 2008 General Election, there were over 5 million individuals who were the only registered voters at their address, comprising over 50 percent of registered households.¹⁰⁸ If only five percent of these single-household voters opted out of paper information in 2008, over 252,000 paper ballot booklets would be eliminated and counties would save an estimated \$340,000 statewide. This savings, paired with the already significant savings achieved by limiting information to one per-household (an alternative that would have saved the above 15 counties nearly \$6 million in 2008) would mean significant savings statewide.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸ California's November 2008 General Election Voter Information Guides were mailed to 5,051,431 addresses that each had just one registered voter and 4,747,770 household voter addresses with more than one voter. Deputy Secretary of State for Communications at California Secretary of State's Office. 30 Sept. 2010.

¹⁰⁹ A weighted cost per voter for each county was calculated to determine the average weighted cost per voter across the sample of 15 counties. This average per voter cost was applied to 252,572, or roughly 5% of single-household voters who opt out of paper delivery.

Conclusion

California's current practice of informing voters by mail cost counties and the state millions of dollars every election while wasting valuable resources. Recent amendments to the California Elections Code will allow counties to take advantage of the more cost effective communication methods explored in this report. Alternatives, such as sending information via e-mail or displaying it on a website, would transmit information to California voters more efficiently than the current practice of traditional paper delivery. Many counties already possess the technological ability to offer these alternatives and could achieve significant cost and environmental savings.

While electronic alternatives are now permitted, paper delivery remains the default for all county voter information. If paper delivery remains a mandate for voter information, the law could at a minimum be modified to allow counties to mail information to every household, rather than to every voter—a method already used for distributing the State Voter Information Guide. By instituting this recommendation with the explored electronic alternatives, California would improve voter information delivery.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Assembly Bill No. 1717

Assembly Bill No. 1717

CHAPTER 119

An act to add Section 13300.7 to the Elections Code, relating to elections.

[Approved by Governor July 19, 2010. Filed with Secretary of State July 19, 2010.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1717, De Leon. Ballot materials: electronic access.

Existing law requires elections officials to provide a registered voter with a sample ballot, voter pamphlet, directions to the nearest polling place, and other ballot materials by mail within designated timeframes before a primary or general election.

This bill would authorize county and city elections officials, if specified conditions and deadlines are met, to establish procedures to allow a voter to opt out of receiving his or her sample ballot and other ballot materials by mail and instead obtain them via electronic means such as e-mail or accessing them from a county's or city's Internet Web site.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 13300.7 is added to the Elections Code, to read: 13300.7. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, county and city elections officials may establish procedures designed to permit a voter to opt out of receiving his or her sample ballot, voter pamphlet, notice of polling place, and associated materials by mail, and instead obtain them electronically via e-mail or by accessing them on the county's or city's Internet Web site, provided that all of the following conditions are met:

(a) The procedures establish a method of providing notice of and an opportunity by which a voter can notify elections officials of his or her desire to obtain ballot materials electronically in lieu of receiving them by mail.

(b) The voter e-mail address or any other information provided by the voter under this section remains confidential pursuant to Section 6254.4 of the Government Code and Section 2194 of this code.

(c) The procedures provide notice and opportunity for a voter who has opted out of receiving a sample ballot and other materials by mail to opt back into receiving them by mail.

(d) The procedures establish a process by which a voter can apply electronically to become a vote by mail voter.

(e) A voter may only opt out of, or opt back into, receiving his or her sample ballot and other ballot materials by mail if the elections official receives the request and can process it prior to the statutory deadline for the mailing of those materials for the next election, pursuant to Section 13303. If a voter misses this deadline, the request shall take effect the following election.

(f) The procedures must include a verification process to confirm the voter's identity, either in writing with a signature card that can be matched to the one on file with elections officials, or if the request is submitted electronically, it shall contain the voter's California driver's license number, California identification number, or a partial social security number.

Appendix B: Survey Questionnaire

“County Election and Voter Information”

1. What is the name of your county?

2. What is your name, position, and contact information?

What is your name,
position, and
contact
information?

Name:

Position:

Contact
Information:

3. Currently, how many voters are registered in your county? (Approximate if necessary)

4. Do you provide polling locations on your county elections website?

Yes

No

5. Do you provide a sample ballot on your county elections website?

Yes

No

6. If yes to questions 4 & 5, do you track how many times the online sample ballot and online polling location information are accessed by the public during an election cycle?

Yes

No

7. On the California Voter Registration Form there is a field for voters to enter their e-mail address. Do you enter this information (e-mail address) into your registration database?

Yes

No

8. If yes to question #7, approximately how many registered voters in your county provided an e-mail address on their voter registration form?

9. Have you communicated with voters through their provided e-mail addresses?

Yes

No

If yes, for what purpose did you communicate electronically?

10. What efforts does your county take to encourage voters to receive voter information online?

Appendix C: Survey Distribution

Survey Distribution

The “County Election and Voter Information Survey” was distributed to all county election directors through a California Association of Clerks and Election Officials (CACEO) e-mail LISTSERV. The survey was sent by the President of CACEO, and County Clerk-Recorder of Madera County, Rebecca Martinez on February 22, 2010. Survey responses were received February 22, 2010 through April 30, 2010.

Appendix D: Sample Ballot Cost Estimates and Calculations

All county costs were provided to the author through individual e-mail and telephone communication with each county election office. Counties reported cost figures to the best of their ability, and were asked to include all costs (including recoverable or reimbursed costs by the state or other jurisdictions) except internal labor and translation costs. Internal labor and translation costs were omitted from the sample ballot cost estimate to help minimize variance across counties. Not all counties incur translation costs and most counties were unable to quantify internal labor costs. Counties also vary in their use of vendor services.¹¹⁰ Some counties provide most of the production for their sample ballots and have small vendor charges. Other counties rely heavily on the vendors and have less internal labor costs. All counties were able to report their vendor costs, although usage varied. The sample ballot cost estimates are conservative and likely cost more than indicated, especially for counties with high translation and internal labor costs. Cost clarifications and more calculation information are available upon request.

Table 7: Sample Ballot Cost Estimates

November 4, 2008 General Election County Cost Estimates					
COUNTY	SAMPLE BALLOT COSTS <i>(excluding internal labor and translation costs)</i>	REGISTERED VOTERS	SAMPLE BALLOT COST PER VOTER	TOTAL ELECTION COST	SAMPLE BALLOT COST AS A PERCENT OF THE TOTAL COUNTY ELECTION COST
Amador	\$25,729.03	21,462	\$1.20	\$130,021.42	20%
Contra Costa	\$931,870.00	539,903	\$1.73	\$5,342,317.95	17%
Del Norte	\$19078.73	12,681	\$1.50	\$41,048.00	46%
Fresno	\$560,730.86	414,411	\$1.35	\$1,928,712.94	29%
Kern	\$291,060.74	311,139	\$0.94	\$2,019,101.73	14%
Los Angeles	\$5,949,198.90	4,111,642	\$1.45	\$41,414,055.00	14%
Madera	\$73,201.97	54,003	\$1.36	\$360,370.68	20%
Riverside	\$636,105.00	838,716	\$0.76	\$4,532,620.00	14%
Sacramento	\$454,031.08	684,588	\$0.66	\$4,001,809.00	11%
San Diego	\$2,077,839.00	1,488,157	\$1.40	\$13,028,766	16%
San Francisco	\$1,312,424.00	477,651	\$2.75	\$8,429,103.00	16%
San Luis Obispo	\$115,410.94	161,256	\$0.72	\$676,270.00	17%
San Mateo	\$426,455.00	389,718	\$1.09	\$3,924,198.95	11%
Santa Cruz	\$244,767.95	148,306	\$1.65	\$1,515,033.33	16%
Ventura	\$558,477.44	425,968	\$1.31	\$3,117,956.00	18%

¹¹⁰ Vendor costs include services such as imaging, printing, postage, addressing, mailing, materials and vendor labor

Appendix E: E-mail Communication in San Francisco County

Below is an example of an eNewsletter e-mailed to the registered voters of San Francisco County, followed by voter responses and the e-mail communication leading up to the June 2010 election.

eNewsletter Example

On Oct 8, 2009, at 1:20 AM, SF Department of Elections<sfoutreach@sfgov.org> wrote:

Voting Begins for the November 3, 2009 Municipal Election For the upcoming November 3, 2009 Municipal Election, San Francisco voters will choose their City Attorney and Treasurer, as well as vote on five local ballot measures. The San Francisco Department of Elections encourages you to get informed and vote. Your vote is your voice. Make sure your voice is heard. Get Informed About the Candidates and Propositions before you vote, learn about the candidates and propositions by reviewing the Voter Information Pamphlet. Pamphlets are being mailed this week and you should receive yours soon. You can also now read an online version of the Voter Information Pamphlet for candidate statements and local ballot measure summaries. Early Voting at City Hall

Early voting began Monday, October 5 on the ground floor of City Hall. Voting hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Weekend voting is also available October 31 and November 1, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (Weekend entrance via Grove St.) You may also vote at City Hall on Election Day from 7:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m. Your Polling Place May Have Changed.

The Department of Elections is combining polling places for the November 3 election. That means that the location of your polling place may have changed since the last time you voted. Make sure to confirm the location before going to vote by checking the back cover of your Voter Information Pamphlet, using the online polling place lookup tool, or calling (415) 584-4375.

Voting by Mail: Convenient, Easy, and Secure

No time to go to your polling place on Election Day? Vote by mail! Voting by mail is convenient, easy, and secure. To vote by mail in the November 3 election, complete an online vote-by-mail application. The deadline to request a vote-by-mail ballot is October 27.

To become a permanent vote-by-mail voter and receive a ballot automatically before every election, download and complete an application (PDF) and return it to the Department of Elections, or use the application found on the back cover of your Voter Information Pamphlet.

For more information on the upcoming November 3, Municipal Election, visit sfelections.org, or call (415) 584-4375.

中文選民服務

Asistencia para los electores en español

This message was sent to you by the Department of Elections for the City and County of San Francisco. You received it because you provided your e-mail address on your voter registration form. If you would like to be removed from this mailing list, please unsubscribe using our subscription management page.

Department of Elections
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, Room 48
San Francisco, CA 94102
(415) 584-4375 | sfvote@sfgov.org | sfelections.org

Responses to eNewsletter Communication

eNewsletters have been both positively and negatively received, with direct responses including questions:

“I just moved [...] I filled out a DMV change of address form a couple of weeks before the move and I understand that DMV will also change my voting address. Will I receive a voter's pamphlet at my new address? Please advise.”

“For past years during election times I've worked as a high school student on election day. Can I still do so even though I'm no longer in High School?”

Discussion of referendums:

“I find it pathetic that our City has to go to the people on such minor issues. Elections cost money -- the next thing we know we will be voting on the duration of Chris Daly's rest room breaks. To have the naming rights of Candlestick Park on a city wide referendum is sad beyond belief.”

And requests to be removed from the list serve:

“I am not an elector, I'm not even a citizen of the US. For some reason I keep getting e-mails from you and you won't allow me to unsubscribe. Please, take me off your bloody mailing list and stop mailing me.”

Recent E-mail Communication

For the June primary election, San Francisco began using CoolerMail, a direct marketing e-mail service “to better manage e-mail list[s] and track their effectiveness.” This service “can track how many e-mails are read and clicked” and will provide information that has not previously been available. eNewsletters were scheduled to be delivered as follows: “May 10 (29-day close), May 24 (15-day close), June 1(7-day close), June 7, 2010 (Eday-1), and a post election wrap after the completion of the canvass. Specific to this election outreach efforts, eNewsletters included information about primary elections and party affiliation, as well as on polling place change locations.”¹¹¹

¹¹¹ Provided by the San Francisco Department of Elections. 19 Apr. 2010.

Appendix F: Shareholder Notification E-mail Example

Below is an example of electronic shareholder notification. Personal information has been blacked-out for privacy purposes.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: "WELLS FARGO INVESTMENTS, LLC" <ld@proxyvote.com>

Date: Mar 31, 2010 2:50 AM

Subject: GOOGLE INC. Annual Meeting

To: <[REDACTED]>

PROXYVOTE.COM

You elected to receive shareholder communications and submit voting instructions via the Internet. This e-mail notification contains information specific to your holding(s) in the security identified below. Please read the instructions carefully before proceeding.

Important Notice Regarding the Availability of Proxy Materials
for the Shareholder Meeting

2010 GOOGLE INC. Annual Meeting of Stockholders

MEETING DATE: May 13, 2010

For Holders as of: March 15, 2010

CUSIP NUMBER: [REDACTED]

ACCOUNT NUMBER: ****XXXX

CONTROL NUMBER: [REDACTED]

You can enter your voting instructions and view the shareholder material at the following Internet site. If your browser supports secure transactions you will be automatically directed to a secure site.

<http://www.proxyvote.com/0798475848530>

Note: If your E-mail software supports it, you can simply click on the above link.

Internet voting is accepted up to 11:59 p.m. (ET) the day before the meeting/cut off date. Please refer to the proxy materials, available via the link(s) below, to confirm if a cut off date applies to this solicitation. In the event of a discrepancy between information contained in this e-mail and the proxy material, the proxy material will prevail.

To view the documents below, you may need the Adobe Acrobat Reader. To download the Adobe Acrobat Reader, click the URL address below:

<http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>

The relevant supporting documentations can also be found at the following Internet site(s):

Proxy Statement

https://materials.proxyvote.com/Approved/38259P/20100315/NPS_56026.PDF

Annual Report

https://materials.proxyvote.com/Approved/38259P/20100315/AR_56325/

If you would like to cancel your enrollment, or change your e-mail address or PIN, please go to <http://www.InvestorDelivery.com>. You will need the enrollment number below, and your four-digit PIN. If you have forgotten your PIN, you can have it sent to your enrolled e-mail address by going to <http://www.InvestorDelivery.com>.

Your InvestorDelivery Enrollment Number is:

[REDACTED]

There are no charges for this service. There may be costs associated with electronic access, such as usage charges from Internet access providers and telephone companies, which must be borne by the stockholder.

Please do not send any e-mail to ID@ProxyVote.com. Please REPLY to this e-mail with any comments or questions about ProxyVote.com.

(Include the original text and Subject line of this message for identification purposes.)

AOL Users, please highlight the entire message before clicking reply.