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March 26, 2013

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of El Dorado
330 Fair Lane
Placerville, CA 95667

Subject: Support for the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system

Dear Chairman Briggs and Board Members:

For approximately eighteen months our County has researched and evaluated alternatives to the current financial system which has approached end-of-life. We have not taken on this task impulsively. As an organization, we have methodically narrowed the field of potential solutions, and are ready for the Board's approval to begin implementation. Few decisions you face will have such a monumental impact on the future function of County government.

Every County department from Agriculture to Veterans is adversely impacted by the inability of personnel to simply input and extract financial and personnel data from the mainframe system. For years we have patched and prodded our old information systems to produce the data County departments require in order to function. As you know, departments have developed an array of internal mechanisms to independently compensate for system-wide technological deficiencies. This has led to incessant haggling, quarreling, and even ill will amongst program and fiscal staff, and between internal and external service departments. The costs of these behind-the-scenes inefficiencies consume resources that would otherwise be directed to on-the-ground programs and services. Moreover, the risk that our aged mainframe system will entirely fail is increasingly real.

These hidden costs and risks are largely out of the public's view, but can be adequately summed up in a single word: bureaucracy. Unnecessary costs to the public are unacceptable costs. Government accounting can be complex, but it need not itself become the single determinant of a department or program's success or failure.

Those who fear change are certain to argue that cheaper alternatives exist, that we will encounter unexpected difficulties, that we are not prepared as an organization. Those ready to move forward agree. We have not wasted eighteen months' worth of effort to simply choose the cheapest alternative. We have strived to identify the alternative that best meets the needs of the organization and therefore presents the highest likelihood of success. As with any project of this proportion, we also plan to encounter the unexpected, and have built in staff and financial contingencies to manage difficulties as they arise. Finally, the alternatives analysis is complete and comprehensive, the leadership is willing, and we have a defined plan of action. If we are not prepared as an organization to implement a new system now, then when?

Honorable Members of the Board, we can only move forward. The risk to the public of doing nothing is just too great. For these reasons, we urge the Board of Supervisors to move forward with a new Enterprise Resource Planning system. Like the current mainframe itself, let us work to make unnecessary and avoidable costs, risks and inefficiencies a relic of the past.

Sincerely,



John D'Agostini
Sheriff – Coroner
Public Administrator



Vern Pierson
District Attorney



William E. Schultz
Recorder-Clerk
Registrar of Voters
Director of Veteran Affairs



Rich Briner
Surveyor



Karl Weiland
Assessor