

**Records, Elections and
Licensing Services Division**

Department of Executive Services
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March 25, 2005

Hon. Jane Hague
Member, Metropolitan King County Council
Chair, Labor, Operations and Technology Committee
King County Courthouse
516 Third Avenue, Room 1200
Seattle, WA 98104-3272

Dear Councilmember Hague:

I was disheartened to read your comments regarding elections in the Republicans' response to Executive Sims' State of the County address. Having met with you twice since the 2004 election cycle and following the publication of the 2004 King County Elections Report, I thought I was clear about your concerns regarding the election process. At the same time, I was left with the impression that you acknowledged the needs and supported the action plan identified in the report.

The proposal for a consolidated elections facility is not a new concept. Nor is it, in any way, promulgated based on a need for space for the Division Director as referenced in your comments in the March 21, 2005 response to the Executive's speech. In fact, I am unaware of any reference to that being a need in any documentation or presentation made regarding elections.

I am surprised given the council's strong advocacy for the external reviews of King County Elections by the Secretary of State, the council's professional elections consultant and the Citizens' Election Oversight Committee, that this consistent recommendation for improving our elections process is being summarily dismissed.

In its comprehensive review of King County Elections in 2003, the Secretary of State's office made repeated observations and recommendations regarding the facilities used for administering elections. Following are quotations directly from the report:

albeit a critical plank of a proposed action plan for continuing the improvements needed in elections. The proposed consolidated facility is, in no way, being promoted as an overreaching panacea for addressing the issues associated with the 2004 elections. It is, however, very much a part of addressing concerns about the integrity of our process.

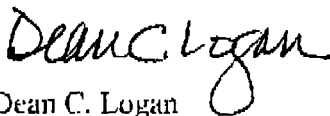
I agree with Councilmember Irons that there is a need for “systemic change” in the Elections Section. I have been consistent in that message in every presentation I have made before the Council starting with my confirmation hearings before the Labor, Operations and Technology Committee and continuing through my appearance at the Committee of the Whole last week. I disagree that improved training and more efficient management will not be enabled by implementing the recommendations of the citizens the Council appointed to thoroughly review election operations.

The systemic changes that are necessary have to do with a work culture that has existed for decades in a fragmented structure while the complexity of running elections has steadily increased. I would delineate this as a cultural issue versus a resource issue. Just as we have in the past eighteen months made progress on increasing resources, concerted effort has been made to address the cultural issues too. That effort continues, but systemic change requires system-wide support from the government we serve.

I have repeatedly acknowledged and expressed my regrets – personally and professionally – for the mistakes that occurred in the 2004 General Election. Sadly, the political rhetoric associated with the close gubernatorial contest, has exaggerated, embellished and sensationalized what really occurred. In doing so, the administration of elections in King County is being defined in a partisan divide that neither helps move us forward nor re-builds public trust.

I remain committed to progressive management and leadership of the Records, Elections and Licensing Services Division – and to maintaining partisan and political independence in the administration of King County elections. I hope that, as a government, we can find common ground and shared objectives that send a clear message to the employees of the Elections Section that, while holding to a higher standard, we can and will succeed.

Sincerely,



Dean C. Logan
Director

cc: Hon. Ron Sims, King County Executive
Members, Metropolitan King County Council
Sheryl V. Whitney, Assistant County Executive
Paul Tanaka, County Administrative Officer, Department of Executive Services