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April 2, 2020

VIA E-MAIL ONLY

raylutz@citizenoversight.org

Mr. Ray Lutz
Executive Director
Citizens' Oversight Projects (COPs)
771 Jamacha Rd 148
El Cajon, CA 92019

Re: Public Records Request
Ballot Images in March 3, 2020 Primary Election

Dear Mr. Lutz:

The Stanislaus County Registrar of Voters is in receipt of your California Public Records Act (PRA) request received March 23, 2020.

As you are undoubtedly aware, due to the outbreak of COVID-19, the World Health Organization, United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the State of California, have all recognized that we are in the midst of a world-wide, life-threatening pandemic. Cases of infections and deaths in California and America rise every single day. As of this writing, there is no known cure or vaccine.

As a result, the Governor of the State of California, Gavin Newsom, declared a state of emergency on March 4, 2020. On March 13, 2020, President Trump declared a national emergency. On March 19, 2020, Governor Newsom issued a "stay at home" order, Executive Order N-33-20.

Due to the foregoing, emergency responses from government entities are a top priority. Stanislaus County (County) departments are inundated with work and short-staffed. Several County buildings have been closed to the public except for "phone in access". The County is continuing to respond to the outbreak of COVID-19, but staff resources have been reduced to only employees essential to perform emergency response and critical services.

Notwithstanding the preceding, the County will take all reasonable measures to continue to provide information to the public during this difficult time, however it is imperative that we use

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our resources wisely during the COVID-19 response. Accordingly, pursuant to California Government Code section 6255, the County has determined that, based on the facts of this particular case, the public interest served by not disclosing the record clearly outweighs the public interest served by disclosure of the record during this emergency.

In short, for the foreseeable future, all available County staff is focused on providing essential services to County residents. When time allows, our office will work with the Registrar of Voters to locate documents that are potentially responsive to your request, and then determine if the documents are public records, exempt from public disclosure, and/or whether exempt information can be redacted. At this time, we do not know when that will be.

Thank you for your patience and understanding during this time.

Sincerely,

THOMAS E. BOZE
County Counsel

By 
Daniel Solish
Deputy County Counsel

DS/jmh