

State of Wisconsin\Government Accountability Board

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KEVIN J. KENNEDY
Director and General Counsel

November 17, 2011

The Honorable Alberta Darling, Senate Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Finance
Room 317 East, State Capitol
Madison, WI 53707-7882

The Honorable Robin Vos, Assembly Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Finance
Room 309 East, State Capitol
Madison, WI 53708-8593

Dear Senator Darling and Representative Vos:

This communication and attached itemized estimated expenses are not a formal s.13.10 financial request for consideration by members of the Joint Committee on Finance at this time. Rather, as preliminary information, I am writing to share with the Committee costs expected to be incurred by the Government Accountability Board (G.A.B.) in anticipation of receiving recall petitions for Statewide and Senate District offices to be filed in January 2012.

Based on recall registrations and statements of intent to circulate recall petitions which have already been filed, currently there are recall efforts underway involving the Governor, Lieutenant Governor and four State Senators. Although the outcome of these efforts is not certain, the G.A.B. must plan to be prepared to process all of the petitions which have been initiated as well as possible additional petitions, especially given the short timeframe in which the G.A.B. must operate after the petitions are filed.

It is within this context that this preliminary contingency cost report is being submitted to you for information only at this time. In any event, the agency will need to expend funds to secure space and other resources to lay the foundation for processing recall petitions immediately after receipt. Therefore, some costs will be incurred regardless of whether a single petition is filed. After the exact number of recall petitions that are offered for filing is known, the Board's preliminary cost for processing 2012 Recall Petitions will be updated as necessary and formally submitted for consideration by the Joint Committee on Finance.

Background

(Putting the 2012 Recall Cycle into Perspective)

The Government Accountability Board and staff gained valuable knowledge during the February-August 2011 Recall Process on the types and level of resources needed to review and analyze petitions and to formulate recommendations to members of the Government Accountability Board for consideration. During the 2011 Recall Process, nine Recall Petitions were certified and elections were held in nine State Senate Districts, involving 40 counties, 594 municipalities and 1,674 polling places.

During the 2011 Recalls, Board staff reviewed 29,672 petition pages and 215,972 individual signatures. At various times and for extended periods, sixteen (16) G.A.B. program staff persons were dedicated to the review and analysis of Recall Petitions and seventeen (17) temporary staff were hired to assist.

Over 6,000 hours of program staff time were spent on reviewing and processing Recall Petitions. G.A.B.'s estimated cost was \$88,662; local costs were estimated at \$2,056,336. The combined local and state cost for administering the 2011 Senate recalls was estimated at \$2.1 million dollars. Recall petitions and elections involving state officials in 2012 will constitute major additional election events which are not included in the agency's current budget.

Planning and Preparing for a 2012 Recall Cycle
(Assumptions)

Board staff anticipates receiving recall petitions for statewide offices as well as Senate District offices in January 2012. As of November 17, 2011, recall committees and petitioners have registered to circulate recall petitions involving six offices and based on media accounts, Board staff is expecting and preparing to receive two additional petitions. This summary, therefore, assumes that the Board will receive eight Recall Petitions as follows:

- Governor (540,208 signatures required)
 - Lieutenant Governor (540,208 signatures required)
 - Senate District 13 (16,742 signatures required)
 - Senate District 21 (15,353 signatures required)
 - Senate District 23 (14,958 signatures required)
 - Senate District 29 (15,647 signatures required)
 - Senate District X (15,000 signatures estimated)
 - Senate District Y (16,000 signatures estimated)
- Each Recall Committee is expected to deliver signatures equal to at least 130% of the required minimum.
 - Wisconsin statutes provide a 31-day review of Recall Petitions. Given the number of Petitions expected, volume of signatures to be reviewed, and based on staff's experience with the 2011 Recall Process, staff will recommend that the Board seek a court-ordered extension of the deadline to certify the sufficiency of the recall petitions to at least 60 days.
 - This summary assumes that at least 10% of all submitted signatures will be challenged.

Estimated Cost
(\$652,699)

Based on the volume of expected submissions, Board staff estimates the cost of administratively processing anticipated Recall Petitions to be at least \$652,699. This estimated amount is based on the aforementioned assumptions and the following factors and resource needs. Details are included in the attached preliminary budget summary and narrative.

- 1.5 million signatures anticipated;
- Over one hundred thousand recall petition pages will be reviewed;
- 16 Board staff will be assigned to the Recall Review Process;
- 50 Temporary staff will be hired to assist;
- A 60 Day review process will be requested and implemented;
- Three additional Board meetings will be scheduled;
- Additional dedicated office space and furniture will be procured;
- Support equipment and supplies will be purchase; and,

- Additional media resources for Voter Identification Public Information Campaign for the Recall Elections.

Request

My intent is to share this preliminary report as a summary of the Board's anticipated and estimated resource needs to orderly and efficiently review and process expected 2012 Recall Petitions for Statewide and Senate District offices. It is important to note that while the number and size of the recall petitions that will be filed is unpredictable, the agency will need to organize and act quickly to process the petitions once they are filed. I ask that the Committee accept the report as information at this time. A formal request will be submitted for consideration as warranted.

Thank you for accepting this report. I may be contacted at (608) 261-8683, or Kevin.Kennedy@wi.gov to discuss this report or respond to questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Government Accountability Board



Kevin J. Kennedy
Director and General Counsel

Enclosure

cc: Members
Government Accountability Board

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