Elections Ontario

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Additional Information For Press Release Of Same Date

Goals of the piloted technology-enabled staffing model:

- Address the risks in the current staffing model which is unsustainable in the long term;

- Improve elector experiences by modernizing the voting process; and

- Protect the integrity of the electoral process.

Addressing the current staffing model which is unsustainable in the long term:

The number one concern of Returning Officers across the province is the inability to find sufficient staff to operate polling locations in a general election.

Finding individuals willing and able to work the election has become increasingly difficult, because:

- The work required in the polls is out of step with public expectations today:

  o It is a one-day job that lasts an average of 14 to 16 hours;

  o It requires meticulous attention to detail; and

  o The most complex tasks – counting and documenting the vote – are performed at the end of this long day.

- The number of polling day staff required is expected to increase to 100,000 in 2018 (from 76,000 in 2014) if the model is not changed.

  o Each electoral district is divided into polls that serve 300 – 500 electors each;

o Each polling station is staffed by two polling officials;

o There is only one list of electors per poll, and electors must vote at their polling station;

o Redistribution will add 15 new electoral districts; and

o Population growth will add more polls.

Improving elector experience by modernizing the voting process:

A key frustration for electors occurs when they arrive at a voting location that has multiple polling stations, as they may be forced to wait in line while they can see other polling officials have no one to serve.

The new model addresses this frustration by enabling electors to go to the first available DRO, instead of waiting for a specific DRO to become available.

During the pilot, electors arriving with their Notice of Registration Card and identification were issued a ballot in less than in minute on average.

Protecting the integrity of the voting process:

Ontario's electoral process is trusted by 92 percent of electors. The new model upholds the integrity of the vote by introducing three key process improvements.

- E-Poll Books now manage the meticulous detail required to issue a ballot.

  o The number of staff required is reduced by approximately 41 percent, or 31,000 staff;

  o Multiple poll officials are able to simultaneously access the list on the e-Poll Book and process electors at the same time; and

  o This mitigates likely staffing challenge for 2018.

- The number of electors that can be served by a poll is increased to an average of 2,000; which in turn reduces the overall number of polls.

- Vote tabulators effectively and efficiently count the increased number of ballots produced by the larger sized polls.

  o During the pilot, all results for locations using vote tabulators were live on the Elections Ontario website in less than 30 minutes; and

o   This improved reporting speed was widely appreciated by media and political stakeholders.

Capital investment in technology and inter-jurisdictional efficiencies

Elections Ontario estimates the initial capital expenditure will be approximately $36 million.

- Elections Ontario will save approximately $16 million in staffing costs across three election cycles.

- Capital expenditures include:

  o   Approximately 7,000 vote tabulators; and

  o   22,000 e-Poll Books and peripherals

- The Province of Ontario can save an additional $28 million across three election cycles by sharing the vote tabulator technology with municipalities.

Next Steps

The Chief Electoral Officer is waiting for direction from the government or legislature to be able to implement this new model for the 2018 General Election. To be able to operationalize the model, Elections Ontario will need approximately 2 years.

Fact Sheet

Support for the new technology-enabled staffing model:

- 96% of electors and 87% of polling officials surveyed found the technology was simple and easy to use.

- 91% of electors and 89% of polling officials surveyed supported the use of a similar model for the 2018 General Election.

Staffing Challenge

- 76,000 polling officials were required for the 2014 General Election.

- Elections Ontario projects that the current model will require 100,000 polling officials for the 2018 General Election.

- Elections Canada was only able to find 285,000 of the 329,000 positions they needed to fill for the 2015 Federal election.

Pilot details

- 42 multi-poll voting locations ran the pilot program in the Whitby-Oshawa by-election.

- The remaining 22 were single or double poll locations that did not run the pilot.

- Technology piloted: vote tabulators to count ballots and e-Poll Books to process elector information.

Elections Ontario is a trusted organization

- 92 per cent of Ontarians surveyed following the 2014 General Election agreed that Elections Ontario makes the voting process easy.

Redistribution

- 15 new electoral districts are being added in Ontario for the 2018 General Election.

Capital Investment

- $36 million for approximately 7,000 vote tabulators and 22,000 e-Poll Books with peripherals.

- $2 million / General Election for software licensing.

- $3.7 million / year for storage and maintenance.

Savings from staffing reduction and municipal sharing

- $5-6 million per General Election for staff savings.

- $26 million across three election cycles for municipal savings.

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