

September 29, 2011

Our file: 2011-018853

Ms. Sandra Finley

[sabest1@sasktel.net](mailto:sabest1@sasktel.net)

Dear Ms. Finley:

Thank you for your e-mail of September 3, 2011, regarding the status of the Internet voting pilot project.

The Canadian electoral system is known as one of the most accessible in the world and, for most electors in Canada, the current methods for casting a ballot work well. However, increasing voting options could improve accessibility for electors who find it inconvenient, difficult or impossible to vote by conventional means. The goal of Internet voting would be to offer Canadians another convenient way to vote, not to replace existing voting methods.

As you know, Elections Canada has committed in its *Strategic Plan 2008-2013* (available on the Elections Canada website at [www.elections.ca](http://www.elections.ca)) to improve the accessibility of the electoral process by testing innovative ways to vote. In keeping with the commitment to improve accessibility, Elections Canada is planning a pilot test of online voting as an additional voting option to be deployed in select locations in a federal electoral event called after March 2013. The select locations where access to Internet voting would be offered have yet to be determined, but could include local returning offices, advance polls, and/or universities or colleges. The objective of the pilot project is to develop the means to incorporate Internet voting into Canada's federal electoral process.

To date, the Internet voting pilot project is in a research phase, studying matters such as security, secrecy and auditing. Elections Canada is also undertaking further research to explore technical, sociological and legal issues surrounding Internet voting. Maintaining the security of the electoral system and the trust of Canadians is of utmost importance. A new voting process must be safe, reliable, and maintain or enhance the integrity of the electoral process. Furthermore, any recommendation to proceed with the Internet voting pilot project will be contingent on the conclusions of a security risk analysis, which will identify the precautions that must be taken to ensure

that this voting method would be reliable and secure, and must be approved by the House of Commons and Senate committees.

The experiences of Internet voting in other jurisdictions, both nationally and internationally are being researched in collaboration with other organizations and Elections Canada has committed to monitoring technological trials in other jurisdictions within Canada and internationally. As part of our preparations to date, a workshop held at Carleton University in Ottawa in January 2010 brought together technical experts, electoral practitioners and prominent scholars in the field of Internet voting. Elections Canada also commissioned research to assess Internet voting in Canadian municipalities and European jurisdictions. A study entitled, "Internet Voting – What Can Canada Learn?", examined the use of Internet voting and helped refine our research plans and better understand Internet voting issues. This study is available on the Elections Canada Web site. Other jurisdictions interested in Internet voting may have published similar studies on their Web sites.

Elsewhere in Canada, certain provinces and municipalities use electronic voting systems, including vote tabulation machines. For further information on provincial and territorial elections, you may find links on the Elections Canada Web site.

Thank you for your interest in the federal electoral process. For more information, visit Elections Canada's Web site at [www.elections.ca](http://www.elections.ca), or call 1-866-222-2565 toll-free in Canada and the United States, Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 (Eastern Time).

Sincerely,



Mario Lavoie  
Assistant Director (Partnerships)  
Alternative Voting Methods