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DEPARTMENT *of* ELECTIONS

## News Release

**For Immediate Release**

February 15, 2021

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### **Virginia Department of Elections Announces Statewide Post-Election Risk Limiting Audit for the November 2020 General Election**

RICHMOND – The Virginia Department of Elections (ELECT) will coordinate a statewide post-election Risk Limiting Audit (RLA) of the November 2020 General Election for President and U.S. Senate. The audit was announced by Christopher Piper, Commissioner of the Department of Elections, at the January 12, 2021 State Board of Elections meeting.

Pursuant to [Va. Code §24.2-671.1](#), ELECT is required to coordinate an annual post-election RLA of ballot scanner machines used in the Commonwealth of Virginia. All of the 133 localities in the Commonwealth of Virginia will be participating in the audit.

ELECT is partnering with VotingWorks (<https://voting.works/>), a non-profit organization, which will be assisting with the statewide audit. Based on the vote totals and voter turnout, VotingWorks projects around 1,423 ballots will need to be retrieved by localities across the Commonwealth to provide for an accurate audit.

“This statewide audit helps to support the idea that the integrity of the election process is always of the utmost importance. The Department is continually vigilant on matters related to the security and accuracy of the vote in Virginia,” said **Christopher Piper, Virginia’s Commissioner of Elections**. “The ability to meaningfully participate in our democracy is one of the most important rights we have as citizens, and the Department of Elections is dedicated to maintaining voter confidence in the democratic process.”

A statewide audit will provide opportunities for all localities and the public to participate. The audit kicks off on February 16th for the general registrars and Electoral Board members.

The basic steps involved in the upcoming RLA include:

- Creating a ballot manifest - Localities will create a simple spreadsheet that lists all of the containers or the batches that contain the ballots cast and how many ballots are in each batch. All types of ballots are to be included (in person, mail-in, provisional, etc.).

- Uploading the ballot manifest - once the ballot manifest is completed, localities will upload the spreadsheet into VotingWorks' audit software.
- Generating a Random Seed Number & ballot selection - ELECT and VotingWorks will hold another virtual meeting on February 22 to generate the random seed number. The random seed number is a 20-digit number created by a roll of dice. The random seed number entered into the audit system software generates the list of ballots for retrieval by each locality.
- Ballot Retrieval lists - Localities will receive a list of ballots to review. The lists will include which batches to open and the ballot(s) to retrieve. Localities will have three days to upload the vote tallies from the ballots retrieved.
- Ballot retrieval - Each locality will hold a public meeting to retrieve the ballots on the ballot retrieval list. A review board of two people from each participating locality will retrieve ballots and record the Presidential and Senatorial votes on a tally sheet. Some localities in the Commonwealth will not have to retrieve any ballots and not need to have a meeting.
- Entering ballot tallies - After retrieving the ballots, localities will enter the vote(s) cast for the Presidential and Senatorial contest on each ballot VotingWorks' audit software.

After all localities have entered the tallies into the system, ELECT will review and announce the audit completion and its results at a virtual meeting on **Tuesday, March 2 at 11:30 AM**. A video recording of this meeting will be made available.

For more information on past audits, please visit the Virginia Department of Elections' website, <https://www.elections.virginia.gov/resultsreports/election-security/>.

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