



**Paddy McGuire**  
**Mason County Auditor**

411 N 5th Street  
PO Box 400  
Shelton, WA 98584  
Phone (360) 427-9670  
Fax (360) 427-1753

August 27, 2021

Election Integrity Committee

P.O. Box 326  
Shelton, WA 98584

Dear Mr. .

Thank you for your letter of August 8<sup>th</sup>. When the Mason County Commission closed the County Administration Building to the public, I made the decision to move the Election Department staff from the second floor to the first floor and construct a new entrance so that I could meet my statutory responsibility to serve Mason County voters in person. One of the impacts of that decision was to significantly reduce the amount of space that we have to process ballots. It was not possible to bring in temporary staff, accommodate observers, and meet the social distancing recommendation of the state Department of Health and the Center for Disease Control. I made the decision to purchase and install a security system that would allow remote observation of the ballot processing center. I never thought of that as a substitute for in-person observation, but as a supplement brought on by exigent circumstances.

I was very pleased that we were able to accommodate observers for the August primary election and hope that the recent worsening of the Covid-19 situation in Mason County and Washington State does not restrict that in November and beyond.

Our ballot processing space is simply too small. I have made a request to the County Commission for additional space so that we are better able to do our work and provide observers the ability to see what we are doing. I would encourage you to contact the commissioners to tell them that a larger facility is important to the public's confidence in electoral processes.

Regarding your demand for a "full forensic audit" of the 2020 general election by a third party, I do not believe that is allowable under federal and state law. After consultation with Mason County Prosecuting Attorney Mike Dorcy and Secretary of State Kim Wyman, I have concluded that 52 U.S.C.A. Section 20701, requires me to "retain and preserve, for a period of twenty-two months from the date of any [federal] general, special, or primary election ... all records and papers which come into his possession relating to any application, registration, payment of poll tax, or other act requisite to voting in such election." Providing election material to a third party would be a violation of this law and "Any officer of election or custodian who willfully fails to comply with this section shall be fined not more than \$1,000 or imprisoned not more than one year, or both." In addition, RCW 29A.60.110 allows access to ballots and other materials for

certain audit processes, which we perform, it does not allow for release of ballots for any other purpose.

I am committed to conducting fair, accountable elections. My elections staff and I follow federal and state laws, codes and best practice to administer them. We do rigorous testing prior to the election as well as audits and reconciliation after Election Day. I am,

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'P. McGuire', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Paddy McGuire  
Auditor