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PINELLAS – The Florida Division of Elections will conduct an unprecedented audit of an election held on the controversial Sequoia election voting system, which failed during the municipal elections held on March 7, 2006 in Pinellas County.

The audit will be conducted at the old offices of the Pinellas County Supervisor of Elections tomorrow and Wednesday, April 11th and 12th. The audit was prompted initially by the request of the Voting Integrity Alliance of Tampa Bay (“VIA Tampa Bay”), a member of which witnessed the system failure during that election.

Under pressure from concerned citizens, Supervisor of Elections, Deborah Clark also subsequently requested the audit. Due to public concern about the ability of paperless touch screen voting machines to record votes accurately and whether those machines can be fully audited according to generally accepted auditing standards, VIA Tampa Bay has requested from the state the full scope, plan and procedure for this audit to help citizens better understand the process.

“This audit of a Sequoia Voting System is not only unprecedented in Florida, but also in the nation and provides a great opportunity for citizens to have a window into the secret, proprietary process that counts our votes,” said Pamela Haengel, Executive Director of VIA Tampa Bay.

VIA has also submitted a second records request for documents relating to an Emergency Rule which was in effect at the time of the system failure.

Sequoia voting systems have had a series of failures, most recently in Harrisburg, PA, Cook County (Chicago), IL, and in Palm Beach, FL.

This audit will be observed by officials from around the state including Florida ACLU Vice Chair Steven Phillipy, Florida Fair Elections Coalition Executive Director Susan Pynchon, individuals from VIA Tampa Bay, and locally based computer academics.

The State has agreed that the Audit shall be open to the public. It will be held at the old Election Service Center, 14255 49th St. North, Suite 202, Clearwater.

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