December 31, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Skinner, Chair
Joint Legislative Budget Committee
1020 N Street, Room 553
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Anthony J. Portantino, Chair
Senate Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 2206
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Lorena Gonzalez, Chair
Assembly Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 2114
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Chairpersons Skinner, Portantino, and Gonzalez:

Attached is my office's special December 2020 report on the progress of the CAL-ACCESS Replacement System Project, in accordance with the Committee's direction when the budget was approved earlier this year. If you have any questions about this report, please feel free to contact me at (916) 653-7244, or have your staff contact my Chief of Legislative Affairs, Tiffany Mok, at (916) 695-1686.

Sincerely,

Alex Padilla
Secretary of State

Attachment

Introduction

This project update is in response to the Committee's request for this office to provide you with the status on the ability to launch the system in February 2021 consistent with the mandate in Government Code Section 84602(b)(4)

Since the relaunch in June 2020, the project made core progress and accomplished the following key activities:

- System development has been completed for significant modules and has advanced to the testing phase.
- New revised FPPC Forms have been integrated into the implementation plan for release this fiscal year.
- AB 909 changes have been integrated into the development and release plan.
- Sister-agencies (FTB and FPPC) have been consulted and updated on status and training.
- External stakeholders, including Political Treasurers and Political Attorneys Associations, and Software Developers and Service Providers, have been consulted and their recommendations integrated into interface construction, testing, and system review activities.
- SOS Project team provided a live demonstration to the legislature including the registration and system reporting capabilities.

Since the October 15, 2020 JLBC report, the project has encountered the following new and existing issues:

- COVID-19 mitigation of a reduced staff presence combined with challenges in collaborating remotely, has in limited cases, resulted a longer duration to complete key tasks as compared to planned project estimates.
- Our stakeholders requested additional time for the development and testing of their software to engage CARS for bulk transactions via the Application Programming Interface (API).
- Lastly, SOS Political Reform Division staff are in the middle of the biennial lobbying registration period.

Secretary of State and the project staff have been strained with the myriad of activities surrounding implementation, the lobbying registration period, and complying with the mitigation measures to protect staff and the public from COVID-19 exposure risks. In order to align our resources to these and other duties of our office, we developed a modified phased implementation approach.

This phased launch includes the first implementation on February 28, 2021 for internal SOS staff and broader access for key stakeholders. This change provides the SOS a longer testing and system stabilization period and provides key external stakeholders increased opportunities to start engaging with the system resulting in a higher degree of quality assurance.

Following the initial launch, the project will deploy multiple releases which will provide increased and additional system functionality. Total system implementation will be delivered prior to the close of the 2020/2021 fiscal year (before June 30, 2021). The culmination of the phased launch approach is the certification process, which will take place in June 2021 when the final steps are undertaken to provide system access to the public.

Schedule

Schedule: As stated in our October 15, 2020 quarterly report, the SOS developed a phased implementation approach in consideration of the complexity of CARS business rules. A phased delivery mitigates risk from a technological perspective and provides the majority of the functionality in the February initial implementation while meeting the legislatively mandated requirements identified in the CARS project. This phased approach follows the practice and precedence of other SOS IT projects which has improved the user experience for stakeholders and the public and has provided a smoother rollout of new systems adjustments, or enhancements. This approach will also enable the continued COVID-19 mitigation measures to ensure that releases are not negatively impacted by the project team working remotely. The remaining functionality will be delivered in Spring and Summer 2021, prior to the close of the current fiscal year.

Implementation Plan

The CARS schedule for the CAL-ACCESS implementation is provided below:

Project Stages	Milestone	Dates	Status
Design Development & Implementation	Requirements Validation	6/2020 – 9/2020	In progress
	Design and Development	7/2020 –2/2021	In progress
	Testing and Training	7/2020 – 2/2021	In progress
	Implementation - Phased	1/2021 - 6/2021	Not started
Maintenance and Operations	First Year Operation and Closeout	3/2021 - 2/2022	Not started

In February 2021, the system will be implemented for use by internal staff and key stakeholders. The plan is to release more functionality each month after February. Ultimately, by June 2021 the system will be certified in compliance with the Political Reform Act provisions and available for use by all external users.