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From: David Showalter <dshowalter@eidebailly.com>
Sent: Monday, April 27, 2026 1:13 PM
To: COB_Response
Subject: (April 28, 2026, Agenda Item No. 7) Request for Board Review of External Auditor Procurement Results – RFP No. 003-2958701-LS

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Dear Honorable Chair Chaffee and Members of the Board:

My name is David Showalter, and I am a Partner with **Eide Bailly LLP**. I respectfully request that the Board review the overall procurement results for Agenda Item 7 – Independent Auditing and Related Services, issued under **RFP No. 003-2958701-LS**, in light of the corrected evaluation materials **confirming that Eide Bailly, LLP is the highest-ranked firm**.

As reflected in the original agenda materials dated April 7, 2026, Eide Bailly's score was originally calculated incorrectly. Eide Bailly identified this issue and formally notified the County on April 17, 2026, explaining that the County Contract Policy Manual requires removal of the highest and lowest evaluator scores prior to calculating final written proposal totals, and that this requirement had not been applied consistently with Eide Bailly's initial score calculation, whereby our lowest evaluator score was not properly removed. After this issue was brought to staff's attention, the County recalculated Eide Bailly's score in accordance with the Contract Policy Manual and issued corrected agenda materials on April 23, 2026. **The corrected results identify Eide Bailly as the highest-scored firm overall.**

At the same time, the revised staff report continues to recommend award of the contract to a firm that did not receive the highest overall evaluation ranking. Eide Bailly respectfully requests that the Board carefully consider this inconsistency between the corrected evaluation results now reflected in the official record and the recommended award action presented for approval.

Under the County's 2026 Contract Policy Manual, RFP awards are intended to be based on best value and made to the most responsive and responsible proposer, taking into account both qualitative evaluation results and price. In this regard, it is notable that the selected firm's proposed price is approximately \$488,000 higher than Eide Bailly's over the three-year contract term, notwithstanding **Eide Bailly's higher evaluation ranking**. Eide Bailly's proposed costs are consistent with the 2025 audit contract between the County and Eide Bailly, further evidencing pricing continuity for comparable audit services.

In addition to the corrected evaluation results, Eide Bailly's qualifications support its standing as a responsible and responsive bidder under the County's procurement standards. Eide Bailly is a nationally recognized firm with a strong California governmental audit practice, a proven record of timely, high-quality audit delivery, and continuity of service through experienced, locally engaged leadership. These factors support reliable contract performance, fiscal stewardship, and accountability—core elements of bidder responsibility contemplated by the County Contract Policy Manual.

The RFP also emphasizes experience with large, complex governmental entities, an especially relevant consideration given the size and operational complexity of the County of Orange. Eide Bailly currently audits two of California's five largest counties, including the County of Orange, and has experience auditing ten of the twenty largest counties statewide. This experience factor is expressly addressed in the RFP's qualifications and technical evaluation criteria, which emphasize demonstrated experience with entities of similar size, scope, and complexity.

Despite the corrected results identifying Eide Bailly as the highest-ranked firm, the material cost differential, and the significance of large-county audit experience, the recommendation continues to propose award to the second-ranked proposer. The corrected Staff Report does not provide additional justification explaining why an award is being recommended that differs from the final evaluation outcome and overall best-value considerations.

Given the size and significance of this contract, the initial scoring error and subsequent correction, the substantial price differential, and the Contract Policy Manual's emphasis on alignment between evaluation results, cost, and experience, I respectfully request that the Board review the procurement results in their entirety prior to taking final action.

We recognize and respect the County's procurement process and submit this comment in good faith to support the Board's review of Agenda Item No. 7 and the underlying evaluation record.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this written public comment.

Respectfully submitted,

David Showalter, CPA

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