

Report on Purchase and Lease of Electronic Recording Equipment by Superior Courts (July 1–December 31, 2006)

Background

Government Code section 69957 provides that when an official reporter or official reporter pro tempore is unavailable, approved recording equipment and recording monitors may be used during specific types of proceedings. The section was amended by Senate Bill 1102 (Stats. 2004, ch. 227) to provide that this equipment “shall only be purchased for use as provided by this section. A court shall not expend funds for electronic recording technology or equipment to make an unofficial record of an action or proceeding or to use that technology or equipment to make the official record of an action or proceeding in circumstances not authorized by this section.”

SB 1102 also added Government Code section 69958 to read as follows:

Each superior court shall report to the Judicial Council on or before October 1, 2004, and semiannually thereafter, and the Judicial Council shall report to the Legislature on or before December 31, 2004, and semiannually thereafter, regarding all purchases and leases of electronic recording equipment that will be used to record superior court proceedings, specifying all of the following:

- (a) The Superior Court in which the equipment will be used.
- (b) The types of trial court proceedings in which the equipment will be used.
- (c) The cost of purchasing, leasing, or upgrading the equipment.
- (d) The type of equipment purchased or leased.

Purchases and Leases of Recording Equipment

Administrative Office of the Courts staff recently surveyed all 58 superior courts to obtain the information required by Government Code section 69958 for the period July 1 through December 31, 2006. During this period, six courts responded, as indicated below, that they had purchased or leased electronic recording equipment or related items for use in court proceedings.

- The Superior Court of Kern County purchased replacement parts for existing equipment, including microphones, a power supply, a floppy drive, a cart, a base, an amp, panels, a server, a mixer, a transformer, speakers and a motherboard to be used to record proceedings in traffic, and limited civil and misdemeanor cases. The court purchased the equipment for \$27,123.
- The Superior Court of Riverside County purchased equipment to upgrade an existing CT-4 to a CT-4A in one courtroom in one location and a CT-4A digital audio/video recording system to replace existing VCRs with digital recording equipment in another court facility. The purchase included various control boards, cards, cables, software, headphones, microphones, amplifiers, digital

recorders, an LCD monitor, controllers, and connectors, among other items. The equipment will be used for internal note-taking and creating an internal record for the court in limited civil, misdemeanor, and infraction cases. The equipment cost \$42,619.

- The Superior Court of Santa Cruz County purchased two FTR mixers, microphones, and software. The court also paid for installation of the equipment and training in its use. The equipment will be used to create a record in misdemeanor cases. The purchase, in the amount of \$18,930, was an upgrade or replacement of existing equipment.
- The Superior Court of Shasta County purchased a 4-channel recorder, a player, and an annotator for two courtrooms. The equipment will be used in misdemeanor cases only, for jury and court trials as well as evidentiary hearings and arraignments. This equipment was a replacement or upgrade of existing equipment and cost \$8,653.
- The Superior Court of Tuolumne County purchased two HP personal computers (HP SB DC5100 H7/3.6 160GB DVR) and hard drive upgrades (Western DIG 120 GT ATA/100 7.2K and Western DIG 250GB 7,200 rpm 2MB EIDE). The equipment will be used to record testimony, objections, and rulings of the court in limited civil, misdemeanor, and infraction cases. The equipment cost \$2,330 and was a replacement or upgrade of existing equipment.
- The Superior Court of Yolo County purchased a DMX8 USB audio mixer from FTR and a VX442 mixer card for creating a record in misdemeanor cases. The equipment was not a replacement or upgrade of existing equipment and cost \$2,890.

The total amount spent by all superior courts on the purchase or lease of electronic recording equipment during this reporting period was \$102,545.