NYS BOARD OF ELECTIONS DECISION CONCERNING REQUEST FOR INTERPRETATION

Requestor(s)	**J. Garcia**

Request Date	**5/22/2008**

NYS Election Law, Guideline, or Other Issue to be Clarified	**7.4.6 Software Setup Validation** c. The verification process shall be able to be performed using COTS software and hardware available from sources other than the voting system vendor. i. If the process uses hashes or digital signatures, then the verification software shall use a FIPS 140-2 level 1 or higher validated cryptographic module. ii. The verification process shall either (a) use reference information on unalterable storage media received from the repository or (b) verify the digital signature of the reference information on any other media.

Proposed Interpretation	The requirement states the verification process shall be able to be performed using COTS software and hardware available from sources other than the voting system vendor. SysTest Labs interpretation is as follows: • Vendor supplies the code to SysTest Labs for a software application tool to extract binaries from the voting system • SysTest Labs executes a full source code review, as well as verifying that all modules/binaries are being pulled to create

	the hash values • SysTest Labs creates and install the build • SysTest Labs extracts the binary/modules • A COTS software/hardware tool is executed to verify the hash values (this is the verification process as stated in the VVSG 7.4.6d requirement) Currently, this is how SysTest Labs is meeting this requirement for our VSTL clients.
NYSBOE Response Date	5/29/08
Conclusion	Based on both internal interpretation and guidance from NYSTEC, SBOE finds the SysTest interpretation of this requirement to be too narrow. SBOE requires a pure COTS solution to validate the software setup of voting systems within the voting system's design.
NYSBOE Response	SBOE cannot support the interpretation of this requirement as proposed by SysTest. We find the interpretation of "verification process" too inadequate in that it refers to the hash verification process only, rather than the entire software setup validation process. The process as a whole must be trusted and seek to minimize risk. The proposed interpretation relies upon the voting system vendor to develop and properly execute a key component of the verification process, which is not the intent of this requirement, and which will not result in the most secure software setup validation process. *{See "NYSTEC Response to SysTest Request for Interpretation of VVSG Vol 1 Requirement 7.4.6.d" which SBOE evaluated in providing this response.}*