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**State Government Operations &  
Accountability Committee**

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**SB 5744**

**Brief Description:** Authorizing county-wide mail ballot elections.

**Sponsors:** Senators Haugen, Berkey, Fairley, Sheldon, McAuliffe, Schmidt, Mulliken and Doumit; by request of Secretary of State.

<p><b>Brief Summary of Bill</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Allows counties to conduct all elections by mail ballot.</li></ul>
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**Hearing Date:** 3/11/05

**Staff:** Jim Morishima (786-7191).

**Background:**

A county auditor may designate a precinct as a mail ballot precinct if it has fewer than 200 active registered voters, excluding ongoing absentee voters. If the auditor designates a precinct as a mail ballot precinct, he or she must notify all registered voters in the precinct by mail that all future elections will be conducted by mail. If the number of active registered voters in the precinct increases to over 200, or the auditor decides to return to a polling place election environment, the auditor must notify voters by mail and provide the address of the polling place.

**Summary of Bill:**

A county auditor may conduct all elections by mail ballot if he or she is given authorization to do so from the county legislative authority. The county legislative authority must give its authorization to conduct all elections by mail ballot to the auditor at least 90 days in advance of the first election to be conducted by mail. The auditor must then notify all registered voters in the county that all elections will be conducted by mail.

If the county legislative authority and the county auditor decide to return to a polling place environment, the county legislative authority must give its authorization to do so to the auditor at least 180 days in advance of the first election to be conducted in a polling place environment. The auditor must then notify all registered voters in the county and provide them with the polling place to be used.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.