

July 31, 1979

Mrs. Ruth Mosher
Deputy Citizen's Aide
Citizen's Aide Office
L O C A L

Re: Purchase of a Xerox Machine

Dear Mrs. Mosher:

This is in response to your letter of July 25, 1979, requesting a written explanation as to the Comptroller's position regarding the Citizen's Aide Office arrangements to purchase a Xerox machine.

As I view the matter, there appears to be two basic questions involved (1) Constitutional question of contract debt and (2) the statutory restriction regarding the timing of encumbering an appropriation.

In answer to the first question, this office has followed the policy of not allowing to contract and make a payment toward the purchase of an item in one year which commits funds for another year unless there is a specific provision to allow this within the appropriation bills. I might add that the state does enter into lease-purchase agreements, however, these arrangements have a non-penalty termination clause which allows the state to terminate the agreement should the Legislature fail to appropriate funds, therefore an appropriation is not committed if the funds are not forthcoming.

Section 8.33 of the Code prohibits incurring or creating an obligation of any kind whatsoever subsequent to the last day of the fiscal term for which an appropriation is made, again, unless there is a specific provision to do so in the appropriation act.

I cannot attest to whether there was a misunderstanding of the question put to the analyst in the Comptroller's office since Mr. Stratton is no longer with us, as he has taken employment outside of state government. However, from the information I have received, your purchase arrangement was to be the committing of a down payment from one year's appropriation and paying the balance from another, which is inappropriate as we interpret the Constitution. The apparent misunderstanding as you have indicated was that Mr. Stratton thought you were going to enter into the agreement after July 1, 1979, which would be in violation of 8.33 of the Code relative to the down payment coming from 1979 funds. In either case, the arrangement was inappropriate.

Very truly yours,

Ronald F. Mosher
State Comptroller

Office of the State Comptroller

State Capitol

Des Moines, Iowa 50319

ROBERT D. RAY
GOVERNOR

August 7, 1979

RONALD F. MOSHER
STATE COMPTROLLER

Dear Representative Harbor:

The purpose of this letter is to report to you the progress toward improving data processing services.

- 1) A new program has been written for the school aid system that will list any two items of information in the School Aid Formula or budget of two different years denoting the difference between each item arriving at the percent of change by school district. (Example attached.)

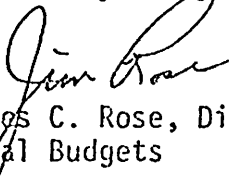
This program can be controlled to produce a printed report in the Data Processing Center in the Hoover Building or to be printed on the remote printer here in the Capitol.

- 2) The school aid and property tax projections will use data from files that will be available during all hours of operation.
- 3) We will also retain data generated by previous calculation, thus enabling us to re-use or look again at a file that was created. This results in not having to recreate files and will save computer time.
- 4) Computer programs have been segregated to allow less dependency between programs. This results in less time to rerun if a problem develops.

These improvements will normally permit us 12 to 24 hours turn around time. Please let us know if additional information is required or a different time frame desired.

Mr. Mosher, Dale Nelson and myself plan to attend your August 8 meeting to discuss the above, if necessary.

Yours very truly,



James C. Rose, Division Director
Local Budgets

JCR:pm