

**North Carolina Department
of the Secretary of State**

September 12, 2018

CONSUMER ALERT

**Elaine F. Marshall
Secretary of State**

Caution! Beware of companies “fishing” for unnecessary annual report fees and corporate information

RALEIGH – The North Carolina Secretary of State’s Department is cautioning company owners to beware of solicitations pressuring them to use a private service to file their annual reports with the Department.

Secretary of State Elaine F. Marshall says she has seen one recent solicitation that at first glance makes it appear the solicitation may be coming from the government, makes it appear that an annual report is past due and would result in negative consequences to create a sense of urgency, and also asks for a hefty service charge fee in addition to a company’s actual annual report fee.

“One solicitation that we have seen looks very formal and you have to read it in detail to find out it is coming from a private vendor that is trying to charge you extra for making an annual report filing,” Secretary Marshall said.

“The solicitation also asks companies for information that is not required in annual reports, and which could open them up to identity theft,” Marshall added. “There is no need at all to use such a ‘service’ when companies can simply deal with our Business Registration Division directly and avoid needless add-on fees and also keep their corporate information safe.”

Annual reports can be filed directly with the Secretary of State’s Office without using a private service online, in person or through the mail. As a best practice, the Department recommends companies go to www.sosnc.gov and file any due report online including paying the amount due through the official payment system.

The Secretary of State’s Office is currently looking into such deceptive solicitations for possible further action.