

Vote NO on HB 4127 No Bidding of Design Services

February 8, 2018

The Honorable Chair Paul Holvey and members of the House Business and Labor Committee,

I am writing to urge your strong opposition to HB 4127.

Our firm has 4 employees and has been in business in Beaverton and Salem since 2012. We strongly oppose price bidding of engineering services and urge you to oppose HB 4127.

HB 4127 would fundamentally change our business. We provide engineering and related professional services for public agency projects almost exclusively as a subcontracting firm. HB 4127 would significantly increase the amount of uncompensated work required for us to be on a proposing team. We believe the passage of HB 4127 would effectively limit our small firm's ability to grow and hire new employees. We do not believe HB 4127 creates new opportunities for small businesses; it would just cost us more to pursue the opportunities we already have.

HB 4127 would allow bidding of design services which is a major step backwards for Oregon taxpayers and our limited and inadequate funding for public works projects and it goes against the long standing Qualification Based Selection (QBS) procurement methodology. QBS is supported by the American Public Works Association, the American Bar Association and many other organizations in the built environment.

HB 4127 threatens an efficient delivery of the 2017 transportation package. Oregon cannot afford another government debacle when spending taxpayer funds.

HB 4127 is a clever bill draft that allows QBS or bidding. We anticipate that the bidding option will make QBS obsolete by many agencies.

HB 4127 is a solution to a yet unidentified problem. Defeat this bill and let's discuss the issue in detail.

HB 4127 threatens billions of dollars in public infrastructure investment. This is a "stepping over dollars to pick up pennies" mentality.

HB 4127 allows all government entities in the state to use either traditional QBS or a bidding process that pits up to five firms against each other to guess at the project scope and appropriate fees to design the project. Getting five bids is a major waste of time, money and has the potential for delay, confusion and extra costs for all involved. And, by allowing two different procurement options, it is fair to assume that the vast majority of projects will be bid and possibly low bid. The most expensive projects to the public are those with a cheap design.

The American Council of Engineering Companies is committed to working with our local government clients and their advocates during the interim prior to the 2019 legislative session to do a deep dive on the QBS process. We could discuss real projects and how the QBS process helped or potentially hurt the design, construction and life-cycle of the project. We believe the issue is too nuanced to find a common resolution during the short and frenetic 2018 session.

ACEC Oregon asks the House Business Committee and the legislative leadership to appoint a task force on the issue where all sides can discuss the issue in a setting that will lead to a much better understanding of what the current law allows and then possible legislation or other solutions for the 2019 legislative session.

Sincerely,



Tina Adams, PE, President
Casso Consulting, Inc.