

HR 2104 (FILNER)

The Safety, Efficiency and Accountability in Transportation Projects through Public Inspection Act of 2009

To ensure that public safety is protected, transportation funds are not wasted and projects are delivered in a timely manner **HR 2104, the Safety, Efficiency and Accountability in Transportation Projects through Public Inspection Act**, will require public employees to perform the inspection on all state and local transportation projects.

On transportation projects, construction inspectors are the eyes, ears and voice of the public. Inspectors ensure that construction standards are met, that projects meet safety requirements and that the materials used will stand the test of time. They are there to ensure that the motoring public gets what they pay for and public safety and the public interest are protected.

When the construction inspection function is outsourced to a private company, there is no longer a representative of the public on the job site. This has led to problems that threaten public safety, increase costs and delay projects.

Threat to Public Safety: Examples in which public safety has been threatened by the use of private inspectors, include Boston's "Big Dig" (where a concrete slab from a tunnel ceiling fell), the L.A. Redline subway (Hollywood Blvd. collapsed), and the Connecticut I-84 project (hundreds of drains that lead nowhere).

Increased Costs. Defective work requires extensive repairs and when repairs are required, the taxpayer gets stuck with the bill. After a project is complete, the government agency is responsible for the repairs, maintenance, operations, and liability – not the private inspector or private contractor.

Project Delays. Failure to have public construction inspectors has delayed projects in the past and will undoubtedly do so in the future. For example, the privately inspected \$12 million carpool bridge connecting the San Diego (405) and the Costa Mesa (55) Freeways was to have been completed in April 2003. However, work was halted in August 2002 when chunks of concrete fell from the structure and many cracks were noticed. Due to these problems, the carpool ramp did not open until January 2005, almost two years after the expected completion date.

What's at Stake. In a 2006 California public opinion poll, 71% of those surveyed said they want state engineers to inspect the construction of state highways; only 20% found private firms acceptable. David M. Walker, the Comptroller General of the United States, said in a recent interview: "There's something civil servants have that the private sector doesn't, and that is the duty of loyalty to the greater good – the duty of loyalty to the collective best interest of all rather than the interest of a few. Companies have duties of loyalty to their shareholders, not to the country."

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees
AFSCME Council 13
AFSCME District Council 48
AFSCME Local 375 DC 37
AFSCME Local 882
AFSCME Minnesota Council 5
Alaska Public Employees Association/AFT
American Federation of Teachers (AFT)
Association of Engineering Employees of Oregon (AEE)
Communications Workers of America (CWA)
Communications Workers of America Local 1032
Connecticut State Employees Association (CSEA), SEIU Local 2001
Council of Engineers and Scientists Organizations (CESO)
CSEA Local 1000, AFSCME, AFL-CIO
Department for Professional Employees, AFL-CIO
International Federation of Professional & Technical Engineers Local 17
International Federation of Professional & Technical Engineers Local 195
International Federation of Professional & Technical Engineers Local 21
International Federation of Professional & Technical Engineers Local 400, RIDOT Professional Employees Association
International Federation of Professional & Technical Engineers, AFL-CIO & CLC
Maine State Employees Association/SEIU Local 1989
Massachusetts Organization of State Engineers and Scientists (M.O.S.E.S.)
Michigan Public Employees SEIU Local 517M
Minnesota Government Engineers Council (MGEC)
Montana Public Employees Association
New York State Public Employees Federation (PEF), AFL-CIO
Ohio Civil Service Employees Association (AFSCME), Local 11 AFL-CIO
Oklahoma Public Employees Association (OPEA)
Professional Engineers in California Government (PECG)
SEIU Local 285
SEIU Local 503, Oregon Public Employees Union
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
State Highway and Transportation Employees Association of Missouri
Teamsters Local Union No. 916/IBT
Wisconsin Council 40/AFSCME
Wisconsin State Employees Union/AFSCME Council 24
Wisconsin State Engineering Association (SEA)