

## HR 1692: The Safety, Efficiency and Accountability in Transportation Projects through Public Inspection Act

To ensure that public safety is protected, transportation funds are not wasted and projects are delivered in a timely manner, **HR 1692 (Edwards)**, will require public employees to perform the inspection on federally funded state and local transportation projects.

On transportation projects, construction inspectors are the eyes, ears and voice of the public. 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. David M. Walker, the former Comptroller General of the United States from 1998 to 2008, described the issue in a 2007 *New York Times* article: **“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.”**

Use of private inspection firms have 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, killing a woman), 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, taxpayers get 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.

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees  
AFSCME Council 13  
AFSCME Council 40  
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 (MGECE)  
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 State Employees Union/AFSCME Council 24  
Wisconsin State Engineering Association (SEA)