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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

AFT Public Employees

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 21

International Federation of Professional
& Technical Engineers Local 195

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

OCSEA/AFSCME Local 11, Chapter 2513

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)

June 18, 2016

The Honorable Elijah Cummings
Chair, Democratic National Convention Platform Committee
430 S Capitol St., SE
Washington, D.C. 20006

Re: Please Include

Dear Rep. Cummings:

The National Association of State Highway and Transportation Unions (NASHTU) urges the Democratic National Convention's Platform Committee to include policies that will increase infrastructure investment, and ensure that federal transportation dollars are invested in cost-effective projects procured in the most transparent manner. NASHTU is comprised of 38 unions and associations representing hundreds of thousands of state and locally employed transportation engineers, construction managers and inspectors, technical workers and related public servants dedicated to ensuring that taxpayers receive safe, high quality transportation services at the best possible price.

We would look forward to working with the Platform Committee to ensure the Democratic National Convention acknowledges not just the need for increased infrastructure investment, but the need to ensure that Federal resources are invested in projects that advance the public interest in the most cost effective manner available. Specifically, there are several important policies that we urge the Committee to incorporate into the Democratic Party's official Convention Platform.

- **Increase Surface Transportation Funding** — The funding to support our nation's highways and bridges has failed to keep up with needs of our aging surface transportation infrastructure. While the recently enacted surface transportation authorization, the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act) included "modest" increases in transportation funding, it is not enough for states to eliminate their large backlog of needed infrastructure repairs and improvements to maintain their networks and reduce congestion. According to ASCE's latest Report Card on America's Infrastructure, 42% of the nation's urban highways are congested, costing the economy \$101 billion annually in wasted time and fuel. Adequate transportation funding is critical to job creation and the country's economic competitiveness.

Now that the long-term authorization is in place, it is time for Congress to address the structural Highway Trust Fund shortfall. Under the FAST Act, average transportation funding provided to states is about \$57.5 billion per year. This is about \$16 billion more than the Highway Trust Fund brings in per year through gas tax revenues. To fill the projected HTF shortfall, Congress transferred \$70 billion in non-transportation user revenues. A sustainable revenue must be developed to close the shortfall and provide ongoing investments to help repair and rebuild our highway infrastructure.

- **Public Sector Inspection on Federally-funded Surface Transportation Projects** — To ensure that public safety is protected, transportation funds are not wasted, and projects are delivered in a timely manner, NASHTU strongly urges you to include policies in the Platform to require public employees to perform the inspection on all 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 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 is protected. This crucial function should not be performed by a private inspector whose primary obligation is to the success and profitability of his company or business partners – not public safety and project quality.

We are particularly concerned about the lack of public inspection and oversight of surface transportation projects procured through Design-build. Design-build lumps design, construction, and inspection of a highway project into a single contract that is awarded not through competitive bidding, but through a process that allows unspecified factors to be considered “significantly more important than cost.” Design-build typically allows the private construction constructor or other private firms to inspect and sign off on the work. The inspector’s role is to ensure the taxpayers get what they pay for and public safety and public interest is protected. This crucial function should not be performed by a private inspector whose primary obligation is to the success and profitability of his company or business partners – not public safety and project quality. Requiring public sector employees to perform inspections on surface transportation projects procured through Design-build will also help mitigate delays in project delivery, cost overruns, and reduced project safety and quality that have been created when state and local transportation agencies irresponsibly outsource these services.

- **Cost Comparison for Contracting Out Architectural, Engineering, and Related Services on Surface Transportation Projects Constructed with Federal Funds** – Increasingly, state and local departments of transportation are spending hundreds of millions of federal dollars on private contracts for engineering and related transportation services without competitive bidding and without determining whether these contracts are cost-effective and protect the public interest.

The U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) has concluded that outsourcing is “more expensive than performing the work in-house, particularly for engineering services.” In California, for example, according to the 2016-17 state budget, an outsourced engineer costs the state \$234,000 per year compared to \$119,000 for a state-employed engineer. Numerous other states have found similar cost increases for outsourcing these activities.

To ensure that taxpayers receive safe, high-quality transportation services at the best price, NASHTU believes that a government agency considering contracting out architectural, engineering, and related services on surface transportation projects using federal funds, should be required to prepare an estimate of the cost of procuring the services under a private contract and an estimate of having the services performed by employees of a government agency. This proposal will provide taxpayers with greater transparency in the procurement process.

Thank you for your consideration of these policies that would recognize the important role the public employees play in the planning, design and construction of the nation's surface transportation network. If implemented, these policies would prioritize the public interest in the development and construction of surface transportation projects. Information about NASHTU can be found online at www.nashtu.us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nadine Westcott', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Nadine Westcott
Coordinator

Attachment

NASHTU Membership 2016

- American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) (Washington, DC)
- AFSCME Council 13 (Harrisburg, PA)
- AFSCME District Council 32 (Wisconsin)
- AFSCME Local 375 DC 37 (New York, NY)
- AFSCME Minnesota Council 5 (St. Paul, MN)
- Alaska Public Employees Association/AFT (Juneau, AK)
- AFT Public Employees (Washington, DC)
- Association of Engineering Employees of Oregon (AEEO) (Salem, OR)
- Communications Workers of America (CWA) (Washington, DC)
- Communications Workers of America Local 1032 (Trenton, NJ)
- Connecticut State Employees Association (CSEA), SEIU Local 2001 (Hartford, CT)
- Council of Engineers and Scientists Organizations (CESO) (Washington, DC)
- CSEA Local 1000, AFSCME, AFL-CIO (Albany, NY)
- International Federation of Professional & Technical Engineers, AFL-CIO & CLC (Silver Springs, MD)
- International Federation of Professional & Technical Engineers Local 21 (San Francisco, CA)
- International Federation of Professional & Technical Engineers Local 195 (East Brunswick, NJ)
- International Federation of Professional & Technical Engineers Local 400, RIDOT Professional Employees Association (East Providence, RI)
- Maine State Employees Association/SEIU Local 1989 (Augusta, ME)
- Massachusetts Organization of State Engineers and Scientists (MOSES) (Boston, MA)
- Michigan Public Employees SEIU Local 517M (Lansing, MI)
- Minnesota Government Engineering Council (MGEC) (St. Paul, MN)
- Montana Public Employees Association (Helena, MT)
- New York State Public Employees Federation (PEF), AFL-CIO (Albany, NY)
- Ohio Civil Service Employees Association (OCSEA), AFSCME, Local 11 AFL-CIO (Westerville, OH)
- Ohio Civil Service Employees Association (OCSEA), AFSCME, Local 11, Chapter 2513, AFL-CIO (Columbus, OH)
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- Service Employees International Union (SEIU) (Washington, DC)
- SEIU Local 285 (Roxbury, MA)
- SEIU Local 503, Oregon Public Employees Union (Salem, OR)
- SEIU Local 1000 (Sacramento, CA)
- State Highway and Transportation Employees Association of Missouri (Jefferson City, MI)
- Teamsters Local Union No. 916/IBT (Springfield, IL)
- Wisconsin State Engineering Association (SEA) (Madison, WI)