

Public Inspection for Project Safety, Efficiency and Accountability

To ensure that public safety is protected, transportation funds are not wasted and projects are delivered in a timely manner, NASHTU strongly supports a requirement that public employees perform the construction 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, described the issue in a *New York Times* article about excessive outsourcing: **“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.”**

Unfortunately, across the nation, departments of transportation are outsourcing public inspection with disastrous results for the public.

One recent example is the tragic collapse of the Florida International University Pedestrian Bridge while it was being built in March 2018. The collapse killed one construction worker and five motorists who were waiting at a traffic light under the bridge. The federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) investigation found that the **private construction inspection firm** – despite having detailed knowledge of the extensive structural cracking on the bridge – **failed to recognize that the bridge was in danger of collapsing** and did not call for the closure of the street below. After the incident was thoroughly investigated by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) investigation, the Board issued several **safety recommendations** for Florida DOT (FDOT) projects – **including the use of public employees for construction inspection.** Specifically, the NTSB recommended that FDOT should require its personnel “to monitor and inspect all local agency program bridge projects” in order “to help facilitate compliance with FDOT standards.”

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees

AFSCME Council 13

AFSCME Council 32

AFSCME Local 375 DC 37

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

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 Engineering Council (MGECE)

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)

PROTEC17

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 Engineering Association (WSEA)