

February 20, 2020

RE: Further Expansion of the Costly Design-Build Program

Dear Legislator:

As a constituent and a state employee represented by the Public Employees Federation (PEF), I am extremely concerned that the Governor, in his Executive Budget, again seeks to dramatically expand the construction program known as “design-build.” This proposal, which places tremendous power in the hands of well connected developers, is ill-conceived, expensive and simply bad policy.

The 2020-21 version of this bad idea calls for the addition of six new agencies and authorities (Dormitory Authority, Urban Development Corp., Office of General Services, Battery Park City Authority, Olympic Regional Development Authority and SUNY Construction Fund) to the list of those eligible to construct projects with design-build. If enacted, those authorities and agencies will be authorized to hire one firm to design, build and inspect major taxpayer funded projects. This year, in addition to expanding the list of would-be users, the Governor seeks to have design-build become permanent and expand it to projects beyond bridges and highways to include buildings and related structures.

Several reports by State Comptrollers have concluded that design-build is more costly than using state employees. In addition to doing a better job for less money, state workers do not have a financial stake in these multimillion dollar projects. PEF engineers are concerned with the quality of the work being performed and with the safety of the general public, not with how quickly and cheaply a job can get done. The bolts breaking on the brand new Mario Cuomo Bridge is a prime example of what happens when you put speed and “cost savings” ahead of quality.

As my elected representative, I kindly ask that you work with the leadership in your house **to remove Part DD of the Transportation and Economic Development Article VII Budget Bill (A.9508/S.7508)** to reject this bad proposal to expand design-build. Thank you for your time, attention and consideration of this very important issue.

Sincerely,
