



FAIRFIELD COUNTY ENGINEER'S OFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: Chairman Kunze
Vice Chairman Reineke
Ranking Minority Member Antonio
Transportation Committee Members

FROM: Jeremiah D. Upp, PE, PS
Fairfield County Engineer

DATE: March 22, 2021

SUBJ: Sub HB74 Transportation Budget
Support for an increase in force account limits

I am writing to express my support for Sub House Bill 74, the Transportation Budget, particularly the addition of the language increasing county and other local government force account limits.

As Fairfield County Engineer, I am forced daily to evaluate the balance between workload and work force. As Fairfield County continues to transition from a rural county to an urban county, the need for increased levels of service, maintenance, and construction grow. Our ability to perform construction on smaller projects is vital to keeping a healthy "balance" to our work force. The following are some important points to consider:

- County work forces produce quality work across the state. County forces build projects that range from small bridges to large culverts. County forces are also the backbone maintenance for bridges and roadways providing a safe means of travel to the public.
- As inflation rises, more and more projects exceed the current force account limits, thus requiring that work to be bid. This results in not only higher direct cost but also causes workforce issues, as we feel squeezed to decrease union jobs to balance with the additional work being bid.
- We need to maintain a good "balance" to our workforce. The ability to build and maintain these smaller projects provides a means of balance and brings value to the local union jobs. With less ability to build projects, these union jobs will decrease.
- Utilizing county work forces on smaller projects provides the most savings and best use of tax dollars. By utilizing our own forces, we utilize a group that is already on our payroll. This allows projects to be completed with far less tax dollars thus allowing counties to provide a better level of service.

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We cannot do it all, but there is a “balance”. We do not want to take anything away from the contractors we work with daily. We value them and the jobs they provide. We want to maintain a good balance of being able to perform these small jobs and maintenance while continuing to contract midsize and large projects with our partners.

If you require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Jeremiah D. Upp, P.E., P.S.
Fairfield County Engineer.