Governor's proposed Bill 6354 Testimony Bruce Bockstael Chief Architect, DCS

This bill is designed to move the Department of Construction Services (DCS)'s key staff to the Board of Regents (BOR) and the State Department of Education (SDE), but it is not well thought out.

First, this idea was formulated with no input from the State's construction experts, DCS; as to how best to achieve this independence this bill seeks. We all work for the same goal and would be happy to help this venture succeed within a reasonable time frame.

Secondly, this change suggests that this move can provide all the mandated services with taking bodies from our depleted department without any consideration for all the other services that make it work. This demonstrates this lack of understanding of what we actually do. I will expand on this later in my testimony.

Thirdly, the Governor put together a very good idea during his first term of office by establishing a centralized focus on construction projects within the state. We already have dedicated staff for these agencies that are coordinated with out other functions so we can provide the best service possible within the restraints that our statutes allow. This proposal bill fragments that for what purpose? Quicker delivery? Lower cost? We see less coordinated statewide work, less understanding of other construction projects going on in the state, and easily a delay to get both groups up to speed, by enacting this bill as presented.

What this bill does is to take a critical piece of DCS and transfer it to other agencies. The easiest way to explain what is being done by this bill is to consider DCS as an orchestra. What the bill proposes to do is to take an essential part away, say the violins section, and transfer them to the BOR and SDE. This accomplishes two things: (a) it provides the BOR & SDE with competent and capable staff but one can never become a complete orchestra by itself and (b) it renders the remaining DCS, at best, a poor orchestra. All of these functions that DCS now provides must be duplicated by each of these agencies. It would create two new units that would not work well for a long time. If it is thought that fragmenting the services provided by DCS is going to save money, I think that should be re-examined.

Presently, DCS has not only committed its best staff to these organizations but has all the required structures to support their needs. In the last four years we have successfully met the Governor's challenge to get the work out and get people working even with our depleted staff. We have been begging to hire more staff to do this even faster.

Lastly, the focus of educators is to educate. The focus of DCS is to construct. I would hope educators would not be worrying about the next building project. DCS accept this burden and shares its progress with them so that they can dedicate their strength to educational processes. Where does the leadership hold their alliances?

Thank you for your time