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Transportation Committee
February 23, 2015
H.B. No. 6821-Support

Good afternoon Senator Maynard, Representative Guerrera and members of the Transportation Committee. My name is Paul Dattilio and I am a Transportation Engineer 3 with the Department of Transportation.

While we support the overall goals of H.B. No. 6821, we have concerns with the proposed language in the bill that would allow the department to hire outside consultants if it is determined that "the department lacks the technical expertise required to perform the design of a project".

The everyday work of the Department should not need to be done by consultants; we should be developing our in-house staff to meet our regular workload. Consultants have an important role to play; they are specialists and very good at complex jobs, but we are using them for many projects that should be done in-house. The use of consultants through Design Build should only be a short-term crutch rather than a regular go-to. Additionally, consultants costs tend to increase over time and we end up paying big. State employees are almost always more cost effective.

One of the challenges of Design Build is finding the correct balance between the need to move work forward and the fact that every time we use a consultant for a project we are forfeiting an opportunity to develop our technical expertise and losing institutional knowledge. I've been involved for years on various projects and structures and the amount I've learned about those projects and structures is invaluable institutional knowledge. In essence, the more work we give to consultants the less control the state has over its own projects. For this reason, other states utilizing a design build system have placed caps on the amount of projects that can be completed utilizing Design Build in a given year.

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