



April 28, 2017

Chairman Smith, Vice-Chair Ryan, Ranking Member Cera and members of the House Finance Committee:

The members of our groups represent both construction employer associations and building and construction trades that work on Ohio’s construction projects. Sub. H.B. 49 now contains an amendment to increase competitive bidding thresholds for port authorities.

This increase of port authorities’ competitive bidding thresholds to \$250,000 would amount to a 900% increase in their competitive bidding thresholds in less than six years (\$25,000 in 2011 to \$250,000). We believe that there is no public policy reasoning for reducing oversight of taxpayers’ dollars being spent by these appointed – not elected – officials.

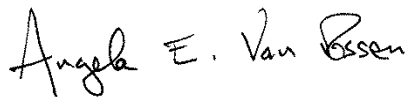
The long-established purpose of Ohio’s competitive bidding laws is to ensure the taxpayers receive the best possible work product for the lowest possible price. Consider that competitive bidding provides numerous benefits:

- Provides cost savings to the project owner and taxpayers by allowing multiple bidders to compete against each other for the lowest and best bid
- Provides a level playing field for bidders by providing project parameters established by thorough plans and specifications
- Helps ensure the use of qualified contractors
- Eliminates opportunities for unethical or illegal behavior such as contract steering or cronyism in public contracting

Every time one entity's competitive bidding thresholds are increased, there is an immediate outcry from all of the other government entities for the same increase on their thresholds. Cities, counties, townships and others will soon be knocking on your door to ask for a commensurate increase in their bidding thresholds. Increasing competitive bidding thresholds is detrimental to governmental budgets and the stewardship of taxpayer dollars, allows an opportunity for unethical contracting practices, and restricts the growth of business and the creation of jobs.

Government officials have a fiduciary responsibility to safeguard taxpayer dollars and we believe the best way to do that is by obtaining the best and lowest responsible bid through the well-established competitive bidding process. Contractors and their employees simply want the opportunity to fairly bid on projects and compete on a level playing field. Public officials should desire the accountability and savings afforded to them by the competitive bidding process.

We urge you to oppose any efforts to further erode the competitive bidding system for Ohio's port authorities by removing this change in their thresholds from Sub.H.B.49.



Angela E. Van Fossen
Ohio Contractors Association



Andrea Ashley
Associated General Contractors



Tim Linville
Construction Employers Association



Tom Kovacik
Transportation Advocacy Group of NW Ohio



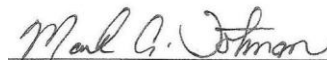
Tom Shreves
National Electrical Contractors Association



Matt Szollosi
Affiliated Construction Trades



Valerie Dahlberg
Mechanical Contractors Association of Ohio



Mark Totman
Ohio Operating Engineers Local 18



Jason Clark
Indiana-Kentucky-Ohio Regional
Council of Carpenters



Patrick Jacomet
Ohio Aggregates & Industrial Minerals Association (OAIMA)