

Lenzi, Chelsea

Subject: FW: please consider this commentary as my testimony as I will not be able to attend the hearing
Attachments: image001.png; image002.jpg

From: Andy Caldwell <andy@colabsbc.org>

Date: October 2, 2014 at 6:25:47 AM PDT

To: Andy Caldwell <andy@colabsbc.org>

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Editorials : Guest Opinion: Deep-six the project favor agreement

Andy Caldwell
October 2, 2014 5:58 AM

Next Tuesday, the Board of Supervisors is planning on approving a Project Labor/Stabilization Agreement with the Tri-County Building and Construction Trade Council.

This agreement will determine who eventually gets hired to build the North County Jail, the largest and most expensive project in the history of the county, estimated to cost over \$100 million. The ostensible goals of the agreement are to ensure as many locals are hired to do the work and to prevent any work stoppages during the course of the construction project.

Most people who understand the value of the trades to our economy would predictably be in support of a program to promote local hire as this will enhance the multiplier effect of the jail construction project. I certainly laud this goal. This has to do with the fact that money that is both earned and spent by locals multiplies itself to the betterment of the overall community. The problem with this agreement, however, is that certain provisions could actually serve to limit the number of locals who get hired in deference to hiring non-local union workers!

As a way of background, please understand that my day job is serving as the Executive Director of the Coalition of Labor, Agriculture and Business. COLAB has had virtually every union in the region represented at some time on its board of directors, including the Tri-County BCTC. We also have as members both union and non-union contractors. I say this to indicate I am genuinely appreciative of what the union movement has done to insure good wages, benefits and working conditions for us all. Local hire of construction workers is good for our economy and I would urge approval of an agreement to ensure this goal is achieved.

Having said that, if the Board of Supervisors are genuinely concerned about prioritizing local hire, then they need to make a substantial change to the draft proposal. As currently written, the agreement requires locals be hired from Santa Barbara County first, and either San Luis Obispo or Ventura Counties second, and that is fine as far as it goes. Unfortunately, the agreement does not stop there.

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If a non-union contractor wins the bid to work on this project, he is only allowed to bring six of his own employees on the job, which means the rest of the contractor's other regular employees lose out on this employment opportunity. Beyond the six employees, the contractor can only hire union workers from the Tri-counties if they are available. The worst aspect of this proposal? If the tri-county unions do not have enough workers (and you can be assured they won't have enough workers in certain trades), then the contractor will be further limited to hiring other union workers from wherever they can be found.

If hiring locals were truly the goal here, then the employer should be allowed to hire any local worker qualified to do the work, including his regular employees, after exhausting the tri-county area unions, instead of being forced to hire union workers from Los Angeles or beyond.

Andy Caldwell is the executive director of COLAB and the host of the Andy Caldwell Radio Show from 3-5 p.m. on News Press Radio AM 1290.