

Iowa National Guard Project Manager Supports Giving State Agencies Project Delivery Options - Opposes Limiting Them

The following is a letter delivered to Iowa lawmakers from the Iowa Army National Guard's Design and Construction Manager, LTC Michael Brothers (Retired), who manages vital Army projects of all types.

To the Honorable House Local Government Committee Members:

I am writing to ask that you amend House Study Bill 674 to allow design-build (DB) to remain as a delivery option for state and local governmental entities, or failing that, table the bill entirely. While I understand the desire to add construction manager at risk (CMAR) as a delivery method, I do not understand the desire to eliminate DB, which is a perfectly acceptable and in certain situations the best delivery method available to our construction managers. The more tools our construction managers have the better they are going to be able to shepherd taxpayer dollars and serve the citizens of Iowa. As a "right to work" state it seems incongruous that we would prohibit an entire class of contractor firms (those that specialize in DB) from plying their trade with our state and local government--we should serve to include, not exclude opportunities for our tradesmen and design professionals to work with state and local government.

I am the design and construction manager for the Iowa Army National Guard, and have been the team leader/project manager for six DB projects to include the Camp Dodge Freedom Center, the readiness center at Davenport, the Armed Forces Reserve Centers with Field Maintenance Shops at Cedar Rapids and Middletown, the Armed Forces Reserve Center in Muscatine, and the United States Property and Fiscal Office at Camp Dodge. These projects span from 2007 to the present and if you are familiar with any of the facilities I listed, you know they have produced high quality facilities. They have also produced an economic impact of over \$140 million of federal military construction funds to the state. I was able to contract these projects through the federal government using in-kind assistance for the facilities built on state-owned property, but if that option were to not be available, HSB 674 would eliminate entirely my ability to use DB and its best value selection process.

I have also managed large scale design-bid-build projects and have recently begun to see construction management firms win bids for our projects and can aver without reservation that DB provides the best value--the best product for the right amount of money. The most common arguments I hear against DB are that: 1) it eliminates an entire class of contractors from competing for state jobs; 2) it takes work away from dedicated design firms, and it 3) lessens the ability of the owner to control the design and construction process. To counter, 1) there are many other barriers to competition, including size of the project, type of project, current work load, etc., so this is a specious argument; 2) DB still requires design, and I have yet to see a project advertised that prohibited stand-alone design firms from partnering with construction firms, plus the

owner really needs to hire a design firm to help with the development of the project requirements manual, and 3) if the just mentioned project requirements manual is done correctly, that is where the owner and users can strongly impact the final product and if the request for proposal and contract is done right, changes can be made after award. None of the primary arguments against DB hold water!

In any construction project change orders fit into one of the following categories-- differing site conditions, user-directed changes, value engineering in the best interest of the owner/government, and design errors and omissions. DB completely eliminates design errors and omissions changes, and no other delivery method does that. Further, the CMAR selection process described in HSB 674 is quite similar to the DB process, except the CMAR has less information to go off of when producing the cost component of their proposal. Why is that method preferred over DB then?

Like I said at the top, I am all for adding CMAR to the toolbox, I simply do not understand the drive to eliminate what is ultimately the best tool in DB at the same time. Please amend HSB 674 to restore the ability to use DB or failing that, table it entirely.

Take Care,
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