

Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, Members of the Appropriations Committee. Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, members of the Transportation Committee. My name is Charles Guy and I am testifying on my own personal time requesting that these committee work to use the state surplus to restore the \$68 million taken from the state employee personnel services budgets in the last biennial budget (\$56 million) and highway budget (\$12.3 million).

I have worked for the Department of Transportation for over 20 years. I am currently a Project Manager for the Bridge program. I have repeatedly watched graduates join the state, as a starting point in the careers, and once we have trained them, they take the first private sector job that is offered because they can earn more money. I just lost an employee with a civil engineering degree. He came here from India, got his degree, accepted a position as a technician to get his foot in the door. We taught him how to use our CADD program, it took 6 months before he was starting to produce models for plans. Two months later, he was offered a position with Caltrans. He is going to make \$30,000/year more than he was making at MaineDOT as a technician.

I have 36 projects in my portfolio. 8 of those are being designed in house. 22%. 78% are being designed by consultants. State Traffic Engineer 2s can at top step make over \$46/hour. We pay consultant engineers up to \$82/hour, with an adjusted rate that is different for each firm but is generally around 180%, and then they get to tack on 10% profit for their firms with tax dollars. That's \$158/hour the state pays to consultant engineers.

The state doesn't pay competitive rates, constantly trains new people who leave once they have some level of competency. The state is paying through the nose for consultants. The idea of using consultants was that if work dried up, we could eliminate hired consultants before laying off people. Years ago, we were told that consultant use would likely never be more than 50%. My portfolio is at 78%, and that is typical for other project managers.

My team is now down to 3 designers due to CJ leaving, and 2 of them aren't civil engineers, they are mechanical engineers waiting for an offer from a designer that needs mechanical engineers. Think about that. We can't hire civil or structural engineers to design bridge projects. We had to hire mechanical engineers. This puts a burden on our senior structural engineer, because he has to give very specific instructions for every step of the design process as they become more competent. The problem is they are not working on projects that match their background.

If we got the funds back that had been set aside to close the pay gap, we may be able to hire trained people working within their discipline who stay, and the state could pay their own employees rather than hiring consultants with these huge overhead rates and guaranteed 10%

profit. State employees don't even get offers of yearly pay increases that match inflation, and we give consultants 10% profit just for the privilege of working with us.

It is my hope that these examples explain part of the overarching problem of underpaying state employees, and the burden that attrition creates. The tax payers have to pay so much more for the consultants, funds that could be used to retain our own employees. Employees who are being forced out of state service just to make a better living.

Please use this surplus to finally close the state employee pay gap, and thank you for your time.