

Operation Wildfire: Good Things Happen When YOU Vote

Centre County Responsible Contractor Ordinance

A controversial proposed ordinance that would establish new requirements for contractors to be eligible to bid on some Centre County government construction projects took a step forward when the Board of Commissioners voted 2-1 to advertise the proposed RCO governing county construction projects over \$250,000. A public hearing on the ordinance and a vote will be held on June 27. Board Chair Mark Higgins and Vice Chair Amber Concepcion voted in favor, while Commissioner Steve Dershem voted against.¹

The county is currently required to accept the lowest responsible bidder for any given construction project, but the county code and relevant statutes and regulations provide little guidance for defining “responsible.” The proposed ordinance would, among other things, require that 70% of the craft labor workforce on projects over \$250,000 be certified journeypersons, workers who have completed a state- or federally-approved apprenticeship training or those currently enrolled in such an apprenticeship program. Contractors would self-certify with a notarized statement that they are in compliance with the conditions.

Supporters say that the proposed ordinance:

- Cuts waste, ensures work quality and worker safety and promotes local skilled workforce development.
- Ensures that quality work in highly skilled and technical fields is being done on county projects.
- Sets benchmarks for participating in apprenticeship programs, incentivizes employers and workers towards skilled workforce development and worker safety on sometimes hazardous jobs.

Opponents say that the ordinance:

- Unfairly excludes otherwise qualified local, non-union contractors.
- Discriminates against numerous Centre County contractors and tradespeople.
- Favors unions that have contributed to Democrat Commissioner (Higgins and Concepcion) election campaigns.
- Demonstrates bad governance.

We found the proposed Responsible Contractor Ordinance at this link²:

<https://centrecountypa.gov/DocumentCenter/View/25256/Ordinance-1-of-2023-Responsible-Contractor-Ordinance?bidId=>

Take Action!

Share your thoughts about this proposed ordinance with the Centre County Commissioners:

aconcepcion@centrecountypa.gov

sdershem@centrecountypa.gov

mark@centrecountypa.gov

The vote is scheduled to occur on Tuesday, June 27, at 10:00 a.m. at the Willowbank Building, 420 Holmes Street, Bellefonte. Plan to arrive at least 30 minutes prior to meeting start if you would like to attend.

It is anticipated that the Responsible Contractor Ordinance will pass on a 2-1 vote.

¹ State College.com, “Proposed Responsible Contractor Ordinance for Centre County Government Projects Stirs Controversy,” June 21, 2023

² Centrecountypa.gov, “Responsible Contractor Ordinance”