



April 25, 2018

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the members of our respective organizations, representing the full scope of the engineering and construction design industry, we write to express our support for the bi-partisan amendment offered by Representatives Westerman and Lipinski to the FAA Reauthorization bill (H.R. 4). This simple, straightforward provision will maximize quality, promote technical innovation, and safeguard taxpayer dollars on federally funded airport projects.

The Westerman-Lipinski amendment clarifies existing rules to ensure that airports follow a uniform Qualifications-Based Selection (QBS) process for airport projects that utilize Airport Improvement Program (AIP) funds. Originally codified in 1972 and subsequently applied to AIP funds in 1987, QBS is an open, competitive procurement process where firms first compete on the basis of qualifications, past experience, and the specific expertise they can bring to a project. Firms are ranked based on qualifications and then the client works with the top-ranked firm to determine the scope of services at a fair and reasonable price.

Architecture, engineering, and design are highly skilled, multi-disciplined professions whose services directly affect public safety and welfare. Firms provide technical expertise, innovation, and the latest technologies – skills that are the most important factors in enhancing project performance and cost savings. QBS ensures that these attributes are emphasized in the procurement process. The amendment would expand existing requirements to cover any airport project that uses federal AIP program funds at any stage.

QBS has substantial benefits to project owners and the public. Studies have shown that QBS lowers overall project costs by reducing change orders during construction and minimizing long-term operations and maintenance costs. It also promotes technical innovation and empowers small firms to compete for work. QBS is endorsed by the American Public Works Association, which represents owners who procure engineering services, and is recommended by the American Bar Association in its model procurement code for state and local governments.

For these reasons, we urge you to support the Westerman-Lipinski amendment.

Airport Consultants Council  
American Council of Engineering Companies  
American Institute of Architects  
American Road and Transportation Builders Association  
American Society of Civil Engineers  
National Society of Professional Engineers