



February 12, 2021

Vince Mammano
Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration – California Division
650 Capital Mall, Suite 4-100
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: Status of Buy America Waiver Request

Dear Mr. Mammano,

The Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District (District) submitted the attached Buy America waiver to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) on June 24, 2020, and I am writing to inquire as to the status of the District’s request.

The request was for the ongoing construction project to install a suicide barrier on the Golden Gate Bridge (Suicide Barrier). This is a vital public safety project that will save approximately thirty (30) lives every year. For perspective, last year 213 people came to the Golden Gate Bridge to hurt themselves. Our dedicated staff stopped 185 individuals who were taken off the Bridge for a psychiatric hold at local hospitals, but sadly 28 people died by jumping from the Bridge. Time is of the essence.

The Golden Gate Bridge was built in the 1930s, without any federal funding and prior to Buy America legislation. However, the original construction, and all subsequent rehabilitation and retrofit projects have similarly used all American steel and union construction workers. It is who we are.

The ongoing \$140 million construction of the Suicide Barrier involves the installation of a horizontal steel net system – all of which is American steel. The net system physically blocks and conflicts with the existing rolling maintenance scaffolds (travelers) on both sides of the Suspension Bridge; so new travelers and steel rails to support movement of the travelers – all of which is American steel - will be installed to replace the old travelers.

However, there is some traveler equipment that is not available with the required Buy America certification, because they are not manufactured in America or they are manufactured in America with some of their parts sourced from countries around the world. The traveler system is a “contractor-designed” element of this low-bid construction contract. As such, the fact that some

of the requisite traveler equipment is not available with Buy America certifications could not be identified until after the contract was awarded and the contractor completed the traveler design.

Specifically, the new travelers will be propelled by electric drive systems that include some manufactured mechanical and electrical control components that are not available with the Buy America certification, and the new travelers must also be equipped with electric scissor lifts that are similarly not available with the Buy America certification. While the pounds of steel associated with these components is de minimis, the cost of these components is about \$2.6 million, necessitating a waiver from the Buy America requirement. As such, the completion of the ongoing construction is at risk, pending approval of the District's Buy America waiver request.

The District is now at the juncture where delays in the approval of the Buy America waiver may delay completion of construction with commensurate additional payments to the contractor.

Approval of the District's request would not be precedent setting, because the manufactured components in our request are similar to the motors and mechanical devices for moveable and lift bridges where FHWA has recently approved waivers.

Please let me know the status of our request and if you have any questions or need any additional information. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Denis J. Mulligan
General Manager

Attachment: June 24, 2020 Buy America Waiver Request