



STATE OF CONNECTICUT OFFICE OF GOVERNMENTAL ACCOUNTABILITY STATE CONTRACTING STANDARDS BOARD

February 28, 2021

Honorable Catherine Osten
Senate Chair
Appropriations Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 2700
Hartford, CT 06106
Via Email Only: Catherine.Osten@cga.ct.gov

Dear Chair Osten

I am writing to share with you the Attorney General's Formal Opinion concerning the State Contracting Standards Board and its authority specifically concerning the Connecticut Port Authority (CPA) and generally Connecticut's quasi-public agencies.

I would like to point out the Attorney General's opinion states statutory change would be required to bring the Connecticut Port Authority and the other quasi-public agencies within the oversight authority of the State Contracting Standards Board (the Board).

I believe the original intent of the Clean Contracting Act was to include quasi-public agencies within the Board's authority, as limited authority is parceled about Chapter 62 of the Connecticut General Statutes. One such authority under CGS Sec. 4e-36 is for the Board to adjudicate contested solicitations and awards. The two complaints the Board received under CGS Sec. 4e-36, was the impetus for the Board's investigation and report on the quasi-public Connecticut Capitol Region Development Authority (CRDA).

The Attorney General's Opinion rightly points out the impact of not filling the vacant Chief Procurement Officer position which has been held vacant since March 2017. This costly mistake of leaving the Board without a Chief Procurement Officer for four years deprived the State taxpayers the bare minimum of oversight that the Chief Procurement Officer position provides for in reviewing and monitoring quasi-public agencies procurement processes.

When the drafters of the Clean Contracting Act envisioned the State Contracting Standards Board back in 2008, they proposed a budget of \$700,000 for the 2009 Fiscal year. The Board is currently requesting a budget of \$540,109 for FY22 which would provide a minimum staff of six. The Board has long stated that having one staff member, as we currently do, deprives the taxpayers the oversight of contracting that they deserve and was promised.

Appropriately staffing the State Contracting Standards Board and placing the quasi-public agencies under the Board's authority is simply the right thing to do. Doing so would provide the oversight of significant public dollars, which the Board's full review of the CRDA and initial look into the contracting by the CPA has demonstrated is sorely needed.

Sincerely,

Lawrence S. Fox by BLS

Lawrence S. Fox, Chair
State Contracting Standards Board

Cc Committee on Appropriations, General Government A Subcommittee