Baker and His Administration Have Been Transparent, Proactive, and Safety Focused from the Outset

We view the actions of Governor Baker and his Administration differently than portrayed in your Editorial of April 6, 2020. From the outset, the Governor has followed the direction of the U.S. Department of Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Administration (CISA) as to what is deemed essential critical infrastructure workforce. The first guidance issued by CISA regarding essential critical infrastructure workers was on March 19. The guidance was amended, and an updated guidance was issued on March 28. The Governor has followed CISA’s guidance, and appropriately implemented rules, restrictions, policies, and procedures in Massachusetts.

Our members perform public work construction in Massachusetts and the outreach by MassDOT, the MBTA, and Massport during these unprecedented times has been stellar. They aggressively put OSHA and CDC COVID-19 safety protocols in place and immediately required contractors to update their Health and Safety Plans to include the COVID-19 protections. Contractors are required to have a COVID-19 officer on every project, and a COVID-19 Guidance Compliance Checklist must be completed every shift. The COVID-19 protections also include the requisite PPE, wash stations and handwashing instructions, daily certification of the health of each employee, cleaning and decontamination procedures for all sites, equipment, vehicles, and trailers, no congregation policies/social distancing, restroom and porta potty sanitation. Projects cannot proceed until all of this has been put in place and will be shut down immediately if not adhered to. In addition, contractors all held one day safety stand downs to ensure every employee, subcontractor, supplier and all job site personnel were educated on all COVID-19 guidelines and safety protocols. All of these efforts, combined with the natural social distancing of our industry’s type of work, reflect a commitment to maintain a safe work environment on public work construction.

The highest priority of our members is the safety of their employees, subcontractors, material suppliers, inspectors and everyone on the job site. They also are committed to carrying out the much needed and long discussed improvements to our transportation system. The drastic decrease in traffic and public travel has presented an opportunity to undertake much of this work in a significantly safer environment. Work that had been scheduled for nighttime can now be undertaken during the day, the perils of distracted and impaired driving are much lower, resulting in a considerable increase in safety. These are all positive.

As your editorial recognizes, these are extraordinary times. We commend the Governor, Mayor Walsh and local officials across the state for their leadership. The proactive safety measures they have developed and implemented have been reassuring as we have all collaboratively and tirelessly worked together to allow the critical essential infrastructure projects to continue while ensuring the safety of the workforce continues to be the highest priority.

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