

Value of Consulting Engineering in the Public Sector

- SC consulting engineers have a long history with expertise in all facets of engineering. Some South Carolina firms trace their origins back to the 19th Century.
- SC consulting engineers design projects from airports to water and wastewater systems and everything in between including bridges and highways.
- SC consulting engineers have worked successfully for all forms of government from special service districts, school districts, municipalities, counties, Councils of Governments and various state agencies, naturally including the SC Department of Transportation.
- SC consulting engineers perform studies like traffic, utility usage, environmental, soil, air, etc.
- SC consulting engineers have literally thousands of projects they have done for the public sector and received hearty approval and repeat opportunities from satisfied customers.
- SC consulting engineers are competitive in the market place because there are sufficient companies offering the same or similar services keeping all competitive and maintaining a high level of expertise.
- SC consulting engineers provide the public sector with specific expertise for specific projects.
- SC consulting engineers meet design, study and inspection needs when demand exceeds a department's in-house capabilities.
- SC consulting engineers provide services that keep the size of government down.
- SC consulting engineers strongly advocate contracting out for any and all services where the private sector can provide the goods and services better and cheaper than a government body. (School districts contract out lunch room responsibilities.)
- SC consulting engineers contribute to the state and their communities by hiring employees, paying income and property taxes and buying from local vendors the goods and services to run their companies.
- SC consulting engineers agree with and support the findings of the US Government Accounting Office's January 2008 which reported from a 50-state survey that DOT's view contracting as a "valuable strategy for managing short-term workload fluctuations. In another GAO report, states with growing capital programs concluded that contracting out allows state officials to respond quickly to spikes in funding and avoid laying off in-house employees when the workload diminishes.
- SC consulting engineers understand that states where there are strong public employee unions with vested interests have produced studies purporting contracting out is not cost effective. But, these studies are packed with inconsistencies and poor assumptions. These flaws result from methods government keeps its records; thereby making real comparisons between in-house design and contracting out near impossible.
- SC consulting engineers endorse Qualification Based Selection (QBS) for all design services including engineering, architecture and surveying.
- QBS, adopted by the federal government in 1972 and by South Carolina in 1976, is a procedure where design services are procured on the qualifications of the individual or firm based upon experience and expertise of the individuals assigned to the specific project.
- QBS couples the best organization for a specific project.
- QBS is a specific procedure by which governmental bodies select the design professional. After selection is made based on matching qualifications and project expectations, a fee is negotiated between the designer and the owner or agency. Price is not discussed until the firm is selected.
- QBS insures the owner/agency is satisfied with the price because if the owner and designer cannot agree on a price for the project, the owner simply terminates its negotiations with this designer and goes to the next qualified applicant.