



**Testimony of**  
**The American Council of Engineering Companies of New York**  
**Regarding the Executive Budget**

**May 24, 2016**

The American Council of Engineering Companies of New York (ACEC New York) is the voice of the professional engineering community, representing 280 member firms throughout New York State that collectively employ close to 24,000 people statewide, with a concentrated presence of firms located within the five boroughs of New York City. Of those 280 firms, 42 are MWBE firms registered with the Department of Small Business Services. Our members are involved in all aspects of engineering for the public sector. We plan and design the structural, mechanical, electrical, civil, environmental, plumbing, fire protection and technology systems for the city's infrastructure, including transportation, energy, and wastewater treatment facilities, as well as public buildings. Our members are also involved in a host of planning, resiliency and environmental issues.

**I. Continued Investment in New York City's Infrastructure**

Continued investment in New York City's infrastructure is essential to a sustainable future and economic growth. The Federal Highway Administration has estimated that for every billion dollars spent on infrastructure, 27,000 jobs are created. These jobs are critical for lower skilled workers and create opportunities for minority- and women-owned businesses. While improving the economy, robust capital spending will provide necessary rehabilitation and improvements to our deteriorating infrastructure, the decline of which negatively impacts public perception of the city, compromises the quality of life for New Yorkers and impairs our ability to compete nationally and globally. We applaud the Council and Mayor's commitment to infrastructure funding. We recognize the imperative to provide capital funding for affordable housing and for sustainability, particularly resiliency for waterfront communities and we support these priorities. But we urge consideration of continuing to improve other critical infrastructure, such as prompt completion of the Third Water Tunnel, but also involving transportation, schools and the full panoply of public works.

In addition to direct infrastructure investments, there are a series of other long-term initiatives that need to be made in order to invest in New York City's future: i) The MOVE NY proposal, which ACEC New York supports, would generate billions of dollars in funding that could be used to maintain, improve and build new transportation systems, and which in turn would increase transit ridership; and ii) we must ensure that all students have access to education in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) to meet the needs of our 21<sup>st</sup> Century City.

As an association representing the firms that design the infrastructure systems in New York and throughout the world, we know that funding infrastructure is essential and that solutions require long term commitments. Implementing solutions to raise the revenues necessary to fund our infrastructure

needs will take political will, collaboration and focus on the public good. ACEC New York and our member firms are ready and able to help New York accomplish this.

## **II. Doing Business with New York City**

The City's delays in processing change orders, processing payments and closing out projects creates potential cash flow, schedule and personnel issues, particularly for small-to-medium size firms doing business with the City. ACECNY is working closely with the Mayor's Office of Contract Services, the office of the Comptroller, and the chief contracting officers at the major capital agencies to identify best practices to lessen these burdens.

There are lessons to be learned from practices already demonstrated as both efficient and cost effective for government which would make doing business with the City easier. Organizations such as the Federal Department of Transportation, the State Department of Transportation and the Port Authority have addressed various aspects of these problems. We are confident that working with the City's procurement leadership we can also solve these issues, but only if the agency staffs are given the tools and resources they need to implement change. These positions and the technology they need will not get a lot of attention, but the benefits will be tremendous. Think of what interest savings there would be if a billion dollar public work was completed even a few months earlier. Think of what it would mean for the children of your districts, if park and school improvements could be completed more quickly.

These are not the matters that receive much public attention - until something goes wrong. But they are the physical backbone of the city and the City's ability to meet its needs. We appreciate the work that you and all of the Members of the Council do to improve New York every day and look forward to continuing to work with you on this hidden crisis.