



Ash Engineering, Inc.

MAR 25 2009

*Florida Department of Transportation*

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STEPHANIE C. KOPELOUSOS  
SECRETARY

March 17, 2009

Mr. Gary Monday  
Florida Utilities Coordinating Committee, Chairman  
Ash Engineering Inc.  
4902 Eisenhower Blvd. Suite 380  
Tampa Florida 33634

Dear Mr. Monday:

The Florida Department of Transportation appreciates the efforts the Florida Utilities Coordinating Committee's (FUCC) puts into coordination; unfortunately, we are presently under extremely strict budgetary constraints. There have been discussions of layoffs, furloughs, and reductions in staff, services, and salaries. In light of the seriousness of the State's shortfall, we are greatly reducing all expenses. Consequently, travel has been limited to only mission critical activities. This means: the travel must be critical to the employee's duties or the travel must be critical to Department's mission and can only be filled by that employee.

To ensure all travel is mission critical, my responsibility is to evaluate the travel requests for the State Utilities Office with respects to legislated duties and mission priorities. Each district has a liaison process for coordinating district projects and other district utility issues. Most of the District Utility Engineers/Administrators (DUE/A) do not attend the FUCC meetings for these purposes. With respect to the district's that did not send their DUE/A: they were not able to deem the travel as mission critical based on their district needs, but would send them if I would issue a blanket statement that their attendance was mission critical. I could not do that.

We do recognize the importance of the FUCC in coordinating statewide issues with the utility industry. Mr. Brian Blanchard P.E. FDOT's Chief Engineer presented at the last FUCC meeting he is very knowledgeable on the Stimulus Package and the most

appropriate person to hear the utilities' concerns and relay them to all District Directors. Although the perception may have been that fewer DUE/A's resulted in less effective stimulus coordination, the reality is that the DUE/A's could not speak to the issue as well as Brian and certainly do not have the authority to enact Departmental change as Brian does.

I have spoken with Mr. Blanchard about the issues raised in your letter, and he is in agreement that the position I have taken is consistent with Secretary Kopelousos' directions. We will not issue a blanket statement to the mission critical nature of the Fucc meeting; however, we will review all travel requests on a case-by-case basis. As always, I still encourage the DUE/A's to attend these meetings as their district deems critical. I am certain in better times there will be greater participation from the DUE/A's.

Sincerely



Thomas R. Bane, P.E.  
State Utilities Engineer  
Florida Department of Transportation

CC: Brian Blanchard P.E. Chief Engineer