

VALAR Consulting Engineering

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Testimony to the
Senate Committee on Judiciary & Ballot Measure 110 Implementation
In Support of SB 213

March 22, 2021

Good morning Chair Prozanski, Vice Chair Thatcher and members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Ballot Measure 110 Implementation. For the record, my name is Norm Faris representing VALAR Consulting Engineering, we are a local certified Emerging Small Business providing Structural Consulting Engineering to the State and beyond. As native Oregonian, and founder, I take pride in the service we provide to the built Environment. We have been in business in Oregon since 2014 and employ five. I am writing today to strongly support the -2 amendment to Senate Bill 213.

Senate Bill 213 will bring fairness to professional services contracts by ending the inclusion of duty to defend clauses in public and private agreements. This duty to defend clause is onerous as it requires the design professional be responsible to defend an owner or other party against claims asserted by a third-party even if the design professional is not negligent. This duty to defend clause is not fair, equitable or inclusive.

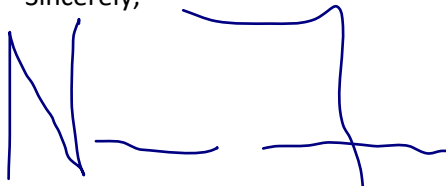
This requirement in professional services contracts is not fair to design firms of any size, but it is especially damaging to emerging and small businesses that typically don't have the ability to advocate against these contract requirements. We find these duty to defend clauses to be a major deterrent to compete for certain projects, many of which are with governmental agencies.

Our firm's experience with duty to defend has been in nearly every medium and large scale contract we engage in, including many affordable housing projects supporting the local communities and non-profit organizations.

We respectfully ask this committee to support the -2 amendment to SB 213 and send this bill to the Senate floor. This is good business policy that will assist firms across the state in being able to engage in construction projects, including many government-funded projects, by removing this onerous duty to defend clause.

Thank you for your service and we are happy to be a resource if you have additional questions.

Sincerely,



Norman Faris, P.E., SE

Principal