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AB-2249 Public contracts: local agencies: alternative procedure. (2017-2018)

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Assembly Bill No. 2249

CHAPTER 169

An act to amend Sections 22020, 22032, and 22034 of the Public Contract Code, relating to public contracts.

[Approved by Governor August 20, 2018. Filed with Secretary of State August 20, 2018.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2249, Cooley. Public contracts: local agencies: alternative procedure.

The Uniform Public Construction Cost Accounting Act authorizes a public agency, whose governing board has by resolution elected, to become subject to uniform construction cost accounting procedures. Existing law declares that these procedures promote statewide uniformity of the cost accounting standards and bidding procedures on construction work performed or contracted by public entities. The act defines "public agency" as a city, county, city and county, including chartered cities and chartered counties, any special district, and any other agency of the state for the local performance of governmental or proprietary functions within limited boundaries, and also includes a nonprofit transit corporation wholly owned by a public agency and formed to carry out the purposes of the public agency. The act authorizes public projects of \$45,000 or less to be performed by the employees of a public agency, authorizes public projects of \$175,000 or less to be let to contract by informal procedures, and requires public projects of more than \$175,000 to be let to contract by formal bidding procedures. The act permits the governing body of a public agency, in the event all bids received for the performance of that public project are in excess of \$175,000, to award the contract at \$187,500 or less to the lowest responsible bidder if it determines the cost estimate of the public agency was reasonable.

This bill would instead authorize public projects of \$60,000 or less to be performed by the employees of a public agency, authorize public projects of \$200,000 or less to be let to contract by informal procedures, and require public projects of more than \$200,000 to be let to contract by formal bidding procedures. The bill would permit the governing body of a public agency, in the event all bids received for the performance of that public project are in excess of \$200,000, to award the contract at \$212,500 or less to the lowest responsible bidder if it determines the cost estimate of the public agency was reasonable.

The act creates the California Uniform Construction Cost Accounting Commission. The commission is required to consider whether there have been material changes in public construction costs and to make recommendations to the Controller regarding adjustments in the monetary limits described above that determine which bidding procedures shall apply to public projects. The act requires any adjustment to be effective beginning with the fiscal year which commences not less than 60 days following the Controller's notification of the adjustment to all public agencies.

This bill would, instead, require the Controller to notify only the participating public agencies of the adjustment prior to the adjustment taking effect.

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: yes Local Program: no

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. Section 22020 of the Public Contract Code is amended to read:

22020. In accordance with procedures and standards adopted pursuant to Section 22017, every five years the commission shall consider whether there have been material changes in public construction costs and make recommendations to the Controller regarding adjustments in the monetary limits prescribed by Section 22032, but in no case shall the amount, as adjusted, be less than fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000). The Controller shall notify all participating public agencies of the adjustment prior to the effective date. That notification shall also describe the provisions of this chapter and the benefits of using its provisions.

SEC. 2. Section 22032 of the Public Contract Code is amended to read:

22032. (a) Public projects of sixty thousand dollars (\$60,000) or less may be performed by the employees of a public agency by force account, by negotiated contract, or by purchase order.

(b) Public projects of two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000) or less may be let to contract by informal procedures as set forth in this article.

(c) Public projects of more than two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000) shall, except as otherwise provided in this article, be let to contract by formal bidding procedure.

SEC. 3. Section 22034 of the Public Contract Code is amended to read:

22034. Each public agency that elects to become subject to the uniform construction accounting procedures set forth in Article 2 (commencing with Section 22010) shall enact an informal bidding ordinance to govern the selection of contractors to perform public projects pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 22032. The ordinance shall include all of the following:

(a) Notice to contractors shall be provided in accordance with either paragraph (1) or (2), or both.

(1) The public agency shall maintain a list of qualified contractors, identified according to categories of work. Minimum criteria for development and maintenance of the contractors list shall be determined by the commission. All contractors on the list for the category of work being bid shall be mailed, faxed, or emailed a notice inviting informal bids unless the product or service is proprietary. All mailing of notices to contractors pursuant to this subdivision shall be completed not less than 10 calendar days before bids are due.

(2) The public agency may elect to mail, fax, or email a notice inviting informal bids to all construction trade journals specified in Section 22036.

(b) The notice inviting informal bids shall describe the project in general terms and how to obtain more detailed information about the project, and state the time and place for the submission of bids.

(c) The governing body of the public agency may delegate the authority to award informal contracts to the public works director, general manager, purchasing agent, or other appropriate person.

(d) If all bids received are in excess of two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000), the governing body of the public agency may, by adoption of a resolution by a four-fifths vote, award the contract, at two hundred twelve thousand five hundred dollars (\$212,500) or less, to the lowest responsible bidder, if it determines the cost estimate of the public agency was reasonable.