
NEWS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: October 13, 2015

CONTACT: Tom Lemmon: 619-521-2914 | tom@sdbuildingtrades.com

Sweetwater School District Leaders Vote to Negotiate a Local Hire Agreement with Career Training Opportunities *Agreement to Bring Added Transparency & Accountability*

CHULA VISTA, CA – Last night, the School Board of the Sweetwater Union High School District (SUHSD) voted 4-0 to negotiate a Project Labor Agreement (PLA) with the San Diego County Building and Construction Trades Council and their unions. PLAs ensure that local tax dollars have the greatest impact on the local economy by creating quality jobs and supporting training, apprenticeships, and careers for local workers.

PLAs are also known as Community Hiring Agreements or Project Stabilization Agreements, and are a type of contract used in the construction industry to set the terms and conditions of employment on large projects of long duration and design complexity. PLAs help ensure that construction projects are delivered on time and within budget, and that quality standards and workplace safety is achieved through transparent documentation with local oversight.

PLAs benefit the community with good-paying local jobs for the residents of the school district and training opportunities for disadvantaged workers, along with opportunities for small or minority-owned businesses. PLAs invest in communities by ensuring every employee has access to a fair wage, healthcare, and pension benefits so that he or she can support a family. The influx of family-supporting wages connected to long-term careers alleviates burdens on public assistance programs, increases the tax base, and creates a boon to the local economy.

SUHSD Boardmember Paula Hall advocated for a PLA noting that these agreements are good for taxpayers in that they help ensure projects are managed efficiently and completed on time by enabling better workforce coordination. “PLAs require more documentation and that’s a good thing for transparency,” said Ms. Hall.

Noting that the Board and the local community have raised concerns about excessive construction costs associated with the previous administration and that it is time to look at new methods to achieve district transparency, SUHSD Boardmember Arturo Solis exclaimed, “I believe this [PLA] is going to be a good thing and we’re going to continue to do our best to make this a better school district.”

Tom Lemmon, Business Manager of the San Diego County Building and Construction Trades Council, applauded the Board’s decision enter into negotiations with the Council and their unions to create good paying, local jobs for the community. “Our union apprenticeship programs provide local community members with the opportunity to ‘earn while they learn’, receive full family medical coverage, retirement benefits, and enter into a life-long middle-class career without college debt.”

During public testimony, advocates of working families spoke strongly in favor of PLAs and noted that taxpayers paying for the bond should have the opportunity to work on these construction projects and enter into the excellent apprenticeship and career training opportunities offered by the trades unions.

Project Labor Agreements use a fair, open, and competitive process for union and non-union contractors alike, ensuring that everyone is playing by the same rules. Examples from other Project Labor Agreements point out that they do not result in fewer bids from contractors or increased costs. Under the Riverside Community College

District's Project Labor Agreement, construction projects have surpassed local business participation goals. In addition, both union and non-union contractors were well-represented on projects.

The San Diego Unified School District and the Southwestern Community College Districts have embraced these agreements and their projects are being completed on time and within budget while creating careers for local residents. Additionally, the City of Long Beach made news earlier this year when their City Council unanimously adopted a citywide PLA with local hire provisions and opportunities for disadvantaged residents and veterans.

SUHSD will now open PLA negotiations with the San Diego County Building and Construction Trades Council, and seek input from the public. Once an agreement has been reached, the SUHSD School Board will consider the adoption of the PLA at a public meeting.

###