



4510 Regent Street  
Madison WI 53705

January 26, 2006

To: Governor Doyle

The State Engineering Association (SEA) bargaining team and the Office of State Employment Relations (OSER) team met on January 26, 2006. They had last met on December 20, 2005 at which time SEA presented several proposals, including a new economic proposal. In mid-January the teams agreed to continue negotiations on January 26, 2006, February 1, 2006, and February 27, 2006.

On January 26, 2006 OSER appeared with about half of its team and without its wage cost analyst. OSER announced that it did not have a counterproposal on economics ready and that it may not have one ready by the February 1, 2006 meeting date. Why?

We understand that the OSER team is not empowered to formulate an economic offer on its own. This in itself is a deviation from good faith bargaining. Bargaining positions for the State are in fact determined by high level officials that do not attend bargaining sessions. It is disappointing and troubling that after more than two and a half years of "bargaining", we are still trying to get a 2003-2005 Collective Bargaining Agreement and the State apparently has no interest in getting the job done any time soon. With over a month to prepare for our bargaining date the OSER team was not provided with the State's response to SEA offer so that it could be prepared to bargain in good faith with the SEA.

We are aware that OSER is quick to respond to inquiries about the progress of bargaining by pointing out the "bargaining" sessions that have been held or are scheduled. While it is true that one cannot bargain without meeting, it is also true that one can meet any number of times without bargaining. Unfortunately, the State has not been particularly interested in bargaining in good faith with the intent of reaching an agreement. To date, the State's position on the most critical of issues has not been characterized by even a modest level compromise or flexibility.

It is very troubling that the State contracts out in excess 60% of Department of Transportation engineering work on a no-bid basis and at a cost that is substantially greater than what it would cost to do the work "in-house"; that the State signs no-bid contracts that provides 4-6% annual increases to consultant engineers and then refuses to provide even modest increases to its own employees. Wisconsin's engineering needs should not be contracted out on the basis of political contributions and at substantial extra costs to the taxpayers. When will the State decide to do what's right?

Sincerely,  
The SEA Bargaining Team

CC: Members of Assembly and Senate  
Office of State Employment Relations