



Laborers' Local 483 Municipal Employees



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Portland City Council
1221 SW 4th Avenue
Portland, Oregon 97204

January 4, 2012

Dear City Council:

The Executive Board appreciates the resolution brought before Council to authorize implementation of the Employee Transition Services (ETS) program. If the resolution is adopted by Council and numerous layoffs are in fact imminent, then our affected membership will ask HR to implement the portions of the ETS program that are best for the well-being of our union and the public. We realize these are difficult decisions and commend everyone who steps forward to make them. We believe, however, that our public efforts before City Council are far from over. Authorization of the ETS program is a necessary and worthwhile step to take when there are resource constraints that would make 60 layoffs in the Bureau of Transportation and 40 layoffs in Parks and Recreation necessary in the next fiscal year alone. However, the ETS program is just a backup plan when such an emergency exists. We believe that only a matter of political will can solve the problem of resource constraints for providing essential city services and prevent use of the ETS program and layoffs entirely.

As has been mentioned on numerous occasions, our members consider cuts and layoffs of massive proportions to be an emergency – not only because our families and lives are at stake but because services that are essential to the public interest are at stake. City thoroughfares won't be maintained by putting our members in transportation maintenance on unemployment. Even with ETS services for PBOT maintenance workers, Portland's sidewalks and streets will continue to crumble without immediate and ongoing funding.

The facts are becoming clear to us: Portland's street maintenance crisis is self-created. Reliance on fluctuating gas tax receipts has led to a massive and growing backlog of maintenance and postponed street, sidewalk, and bikeway improvements. As ODOT and your five year forecast predicts, GTR is expected to remain at low levels indefinitely. Rather than maintaining City thoroughfares, however, resources have been shifted out of PBOT through general fund overhead charges and transfers to other City bureaus. City internal services funds have accumulated resources far in excess of requirements. The purpose of these funds is to support bureaus like PBOT, which directly serve the public. As we mentioned in our last statement to you, at the beginning of the most recent reported fiscal year, internal service funds held \$110,186,791 million dollars in unrestricted net assets available for any legal purpose. This number includes *all* internal service funds *after* accounting for current and future liabilities.

The immediate solution is simple. As we suggested in our last statement, we suggest that

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Council declare a holiday on general fund overhead charges and transfers from PBOT. Council could also free more Internal Service resources to Parks and Recreation for maintenance of its services, as well. The holiday would allow PBOT to maintain City streets, sidewalks, and bikeways.

As we also mentioned to City Council in our last statement, we have solutions for the long-term. Recognizing Portlanders' increasing reliance on non-automotive modes of transportation, we are working with stakeholders to develop a funding model that would supplement gas tax receipts and give street, sidewalk and bikeway maintenance a more secure foundation. With maintenance secured, PBOT could progressively restore its contributions to general fund overhead, too. As Council knows, a campaign for a new funding model takes some time but we are moving full speed ahead. A twenty-first century city needs twenty-first century financing. Laborers' Local 483 will help get the City of Portland there – if our union is not dismantled.

In short, we believe responsible governance requires Council to examine its Internal Service Funds to prevent cuts to city services. For the long-term solution, Council can join stakeholders wanting City thoroughfares maintained properly and funded securely. Thank you for your consideration of our concerns.

Very truly yours,

Executive Board, Laborers' Local 483

Signed January 3, 2012

Scott Gibson, President, Laborers' Local 483, Parks and Recreation

Kevin Stampflee, Vice President, Laborers' Local 483, Bureau of Transportation

Farrell Richartz, Recording Secretary, Laborers' Local 483, Bureau of Transportation

Mike Murphy, Member-at-Large, Laborers' Local 483, Parks and Recreation

Wesley Buchholz, Member-at-Large, Laborers' Local 483, Bureau of Environmental Systems

--Affiliated--

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Col. Pac. Building and Construction Trades Council | District Council of Trade Unions Representing Public Employees