

TESTIMONY TO ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS



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Chair Considine and Members of the Assembly Committee on Government Affairs,

Nevada Policy opposes AB 303, which would expand prevailing wage mandates to broadband and telecommunications projects receiving public funding. While this proposal is framed as a way to ensure fair wages, in reality, it inflates labor costs and burdens taxpayers. Since 1937, Nevada law has required public works projects to adhere to a “prevailing wage” standard. However, these wage rates are not determined by true market conditions; instead, they are heavily influenced by construction unions, which artificially drive up the cost of labor. A survey conducted by the Nevada Labor Commissioner determined these rates, but the methodology is deeply flawed.¹

As a result, prevailing wages in Nevada are, on average, 45% higher than market wages. In just 2009 and 2010 alone, taxpayers paid an extra \$1 billion in wage premiums due to these inflated rates.² AB 303 will only make this problem worse by applying prevailing wage laws to broadband and fiber-optic projects—industries that are not traditionally classified as public works. For comparison, in 2011, an alarm installer working under prevailing wage in Clark County was receiving \$55.95 per hour, while Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation reported the average wage of \$24.59 for the same profession.³ This expansion will similarly drive up costs for other professions instead placing the burden on the taxpayer.

If Nevada truly wants to ensure fair pay and quality job opportunities while expanding its broadband infrastructure efficiently, the solution is not more regulation and artificial wage inflation. The state should instead promote open and competitive bidding, where wages are set by the free market rather than dictated by outdated formulas.

For these reasons, I urge this committee to oppose AB 303. Thank you for your time and consideration.

¹ Geoffrey Lawrence, “Who Really Prevails Under Prevailing Wage?” Nevada Policy Research Institute, 2011, <https://nevadapolicy.org/study/who-really-prevails-under-prevailing-wage/>.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

Prevailing Wage Versus Market Wage (Reported by Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation), by Job Classification, Clark County, 2011

Job Classification (Journeyman)	Prevailing Wage	DETR Average Wage	DETR Wage + 40% (accounting for benefits)
Alarm Installer	\$55.95	\$24.59	\$34.43
Bricklayer	\$44.71	\$20.07	\$28.10
Carpenter	\$48.95	\$26.57	\$37.20
Cement Mason	\$46.28	\$22.63	\$31.68
Electrician - Communication	\$39.83	\$25.33	\$35.46
Electrician- Wireman	\$56.31	\$30.01	\$42.01
Floor Coverer	\$47.32	\$23.63	\$33.08
Glazier	\$57.51	\$28.10	\$39.34
Iron Worker	\$56.74	\$26.25	\$36.75
Laborer	\$42.94	\$19.15	\$26.81
Mechanical Insulator	\$56.23	\$21.42	\$29.99
Millwright	\$49.95	\$31.07	\$43.50
Operating Engineer	\$55.67	\$29.23	\$40.92
Painter	\$46.64	\$24.37	\$34.12
Plumber/Pipefitter	\$56.52	\$28.25	\$39.69
Refrigeration	\$35.17	\$21.28	\$29.79
Roofer	\$31.91	\$18.62	\$26.07
Sheet Metal Worker	\$59.52	\$34.86	\$48.80
Surveyor	\$57.59	\$29.70	\$41.58
Taper	\$46.64	\$21.03	\$29.44
Tile Setter	\$34.63	\$23.56	\$32.98
Truck Driver	\$46.13	\$22.45	\$31.43

Prevailing Wage Versus Market Wage (Reported by Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation), by Job Classification, Washoe County, 2011

Job Classification (Journeyman)	Prevailing Wage	DETR Average Wage	DETR Wage + 40% (accounting for benefits)
Alarm Installer	\$27.95	\$21.48	\$30.07
Carpenter	\$38.80	\$23.60	\$33.04
Cement Mason	\$34.40	\$25.45	\$35.63
Electrician - Communication	\$29.36	\$18.01	\$25.21
Electrician- Wireman	\$50.78	\$25.21	\$35.29
Iron Worker	\$56.74	\$34.02	\$47.63
Laborer	\$30.82	\$17.89	\$25.05
Operating Engineer	\$43.08	\$25.53	\$35.74
Painter	\$32.74	\$18.74	\$26.24
Plumber/Pipefitter	\$45.20	\$33.47	\$46.86
Refrigeration	\$41.58	\$27.28	\$38.19
Roofer	\$41.58	\$27.28	\$38.19
Sheet Metal Worker	\$48.35	\$17.90	\$25.06
Surveyor	\$27.88	\$39.80	\$55.72
Taper	\$36.28	\$19.38	\$27.13
Tile Setter	\$32.87	\$20.86	\$29.20