



Andrew Colas  
President  
Colas Construction, Inc.  
19 NW 5<sup>th</sup> Ave., Suite 203  
Portland, OR 97209

Re: United States Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works

Dear Senator Merkley,

Colas Construction, Inc. is a second generation family owned business based in Portland Oregon. I am Andrew Colas, President of Colas Construction, Inc. Colas Construction has been in operation for over 16 years and currently employs 20 people. Our company has always strived to inspire individuals and communities through exceptional construction, community involvement, hiring of a qualified diverse workforce and promoting sustainability while maintaining a positive and progressive family executive structure.

When the opportunity arose for Colas Construction, Inc. to be involved in the construction of the June Key Delta center, we were thrilled; we could not have imagined a project that better represented our mission. The goal of the project was to convert a former Brownfield gas station into one of the first Commercial Living buildings in the State of Oregon. In order to achieve this goal, the project incorporated a myriad of sustainable features including (but not limited to):

- Incorporating cargo containers into the design
- Reusing the existing roof structure
- Solar panel ready electrical design
- High efficiency heat exchange heating and cooling system
- Grey water reclamation system design
- All products had to be sourced within 200 miles of the site
- Storm water system designed to keep all storm water onsite
- Extremely high efficiency insulation system

The project design and implementation was tremendously technical, making the sourcing of the sub-contractors base very important. In an effort to reduce risk and exposure, a lot of general contractors would have used the highly technical design as an excuse to hire only the largest sub-contractors in town. In contrast, our team saw this project as an opportunity to achieve true sustainability which includes a multi-faceted focus on social, environmental and economic impacts. The project was built during the height of the recession while several small businesses were not being granted opportunities to work. The Colas ownership and construction team agreed that if we truly wanted to achieve a sustainable building, we had to have a positive impact on the surrounding area's small businesses.



As such, we designed a contracting plan to insure that more than 50% of the dollars spent on the June Key Delta project would be awarded to minority, women, or emerging small businesses. In addition, we provided for pre-apprenticeship opportunities, through programs such as the Oregon Tradeswomen, so more communities could gain exposure and experience through this highly technical project. This project not only provided work opportunities for several local small businesses, it also helped to enhance their resumes so they might be better considered for future projects. Too often the highly technical nature of green projects can have the unintended effect of limiting opportunities for small businesses, simply because they don't have the resume experience to initially qualify. Our team's goal was to achieve true sustainability through a dedicated pursuit of a "triple bottom line outcome." Today I'm proud to say that through this project, Colas Construction and Portland Sigma Theta Delta created jobs and enhanced future opportunities for many small businesses, while creating an important and nationally recognized neighborhood space for the community.

Sincerely,

Andrew Colas

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Colas', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

President,  
Colas Construction, Inc.