EMERIO
ENGINEERING ▪ SURVEYING ▪ DESIGN

March 20, 2023

Carrie L. Baxandall
Program Manager
Certification Office for Business Inclusion and Diversity
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RE: Emerio Design testimony for Ways & Means meeting on Wednesday, March 22nd.

Dear Carrie,

Thank you for the opportunity to share our experiences being COBID-certified. As an engineering, surveying, and design company, this designation has helped Emerio transform in size and impact since being granted.

Founded in 2005, **Emerio has been MBE/DBE certified (#5611) since 2009.** In fact, Oregon's COBID certification has helped our company secure over 100 projects with public agencies, a dozen of which are currently ongoing. With initiatives ranging from ADA ramp installations to Interstate Bridge Replacements, water bureau filtration plant work to several other key community projects, the advantages we have yielded from this certification are endless.

More specifically, COBID certification has bolstered:

1. **Helping A Minority-Owned Business Grow.** In 2009, Emerio was a 4-person operation with no public projects in its portfolio. COBID certification helped our minority-owned business access spaces and agencies we would not have been able to otherwise. We grew from being a subcontractor to prime contractor on several projects—and now have over 100 employees and 3 Oregon-based offices. That impact goes even further, as we have been able to pay it forward by setting up mentorship programs for other BIPOC business owners in Oregon who are just starting.

2. **Meeting Community Diversity Goals.** Every public agency needs to have a certain number of projects supported by DBE businesses. At the state, county, or city level, this requirement can range anywhere from 8%-30% of all projects needing to be DBE-supported. Since our COBID certification, we are more often positioned as the provider of choice for community initiatives—which helped us grow from small contracts to larger, multi-disciplinary prime contracts with the City of Portland, Multnomah County, Washington County, Clackamas County, TriMet, and ODOT.

3. **Creating Opportunities for Those Underrepresented/Disadvantaged.** COBID certification has helped us realize our vision of bringing more BIPOC, underrepresented, and disadvantaged people into our engineering industry and the workplace at large. In our company alone, 45% of our Executive Staff, 38% of our Professional/Technology Staff, and 85% of our Administrative Staff are from traditionally disadvantaged backgrounds (46% of Entire Staff in Total). In addition, we have been able to implement Internship Programs where 50% of participation is people of color (POC)—as well as create job posting and hiring in spaces specifically for women, individuals with disabilities, BIPOC, veterans, and LGBTQIA+ applicants.

We also want to acknowledge that, at every turn, Business Oregon has been a champion for small businesses, especially those like us that are DBE and bringing a more diverse set of skills and experience to Oregon's workforce.

We are very thankful for COBID and the doors it has opened for us in the engineering industry in Oregon!

Respectfully,
Neil Fernando
Owner & Founder
Emerio Design, LLC