



LAKE COUNTY FOREST PRESERVES  
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Preservation, Restoration, Education and Recreation

**DATE:** March 4, 2019

**MEMO TO:** Adam R. Didech, Chair  
Legislative Committee

Terry Wilke, Chair  
Finance Committee

**FROM:** Alex “Ty” Kovach  
Executive Director

**REQUEST:** Provide Policy Direction on potential legislation amending the District’s purchasing authority under the Downstate Forest Preserve District Act (Act).

**STRATEGIC DIRECTION SUPPORTED:** Organizational Sustainability

**FINANCIAL DATA:** There is no immediate financial impact associated with this legislation. If successful it may decrease the cost of some construction projects.

**BACKGROUND:** In November 2018 the Board approved the District’s 2019 State Legislative Program which included the statement:

**Establish responsible and efficient purchasing/contracting authority, including the ability to use Design-Build contracts.**

To that end, District staff and our legislative consultants, Strategic Advocacy Group (SAG), have been drafting legislation that would give Forest Preserve Districts the authority to use Design-Build contracts when advantageous to do so. Municipalities, park districts and counties already have such authority.

In discussing this issue with other Forest Preserve Districts and the District’s Finance Department staff, it became apparent that, if we are proposing to amend the section of the Act governing the District’s purchasing authority, it may be advantageous to also amend the statutory dollar level that triggers the formal bidding process. That level is currently \$25,000.

Raising this level to \$30,000, which is the level set by statute for counties, would be in line with our stated goal of establishing efficient purchasing/contracting authority. Most contracts and purchases under \$30,000 are relatively simple transactions. Going out for formal bids is a time-consuming and staff-intensive process. In most cases, the District’s professional purchasing staff would be able to informally solicit and analyze quotes or proposals for this level of project in a matter of days, rather than the weeks it takes to complete the formal competitive bidding process, which requires publishing notice in a newspaper, waiting for sealed bids to be submitted, and

analyzing all bids to ensure they are conforming. Staff believes that, for \$25,000 to \$30,000 contracts, they can still get the best deal for the District by utilizing a less formal quote or proposal process.

Staff is requesting policy direction from the Legislative and Finance Committees on whether to pursue the \$30,000 purchasing limit as we move forward with the Design-Build legislation.

**REVIEW BY OTHERS:** Chief Operations Officer, Director of Finance, Corporate Counsel