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P.O. Box 370 | Kingston, MA | 02364  
781.585.5894  
www.mca-ma.com

April 12, 2010

**VIA FACSIMILE AND EMAIL**

617-248-0372; canders@tre.state.ma.us

The Honorable Timothy Cahill  
Treasurer and Receiver General  
State House, Room 227  
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Treasurer Cahill,

The March 31, 2010 Boston Globe contained a column by Scot Lehigh, entitled, "Courting trade unions," and in that column, Mr. Lehigh reported the stances of the gubernatorial candidates with regard to Project Labor Agreements. However, Mr. Lehigh wrote, "Independent candidate Tim Cahill's campaign couldn't provide his position by deadline."

I write today to ask you to provide the Merit Construction Alliance, which represents open shop contractors and employees across Massachusetts, with your position on whether the Commonwealth should adopt PLAs on state-funded projects. If elected governor, would your administration ever seek to use PLAs or would you sign legislation containing a PLA?

My organization is unalterably opposed to PLAs because they are terrible public policy that have proven to increase the cost of construction projects and amount to employment discrimination against the vast majority of construction workers in Massachusetts who choose to not belong to a union. In fact, federal labor statistics show that four out of five construction workers in Massachusetts are open shop.

Numerous independent studies show empirically that PLAs increase construction costs by decreasing competition. When only union contractors can bid on a project, the number of bids drops dramatically and prices skyrocket. In fact, a Beacon Hill Institute study of school building construction showed PLAs add about 20 percent to the overall cost of construction.

By locking out open shop workers, PLAs amount to employment discrimination against anyone who makes the personal decision to not carry a union membership card. Anytime government uses a PLA, it is saying that open shop workers are good enough

to pay taxes to fund the construction, but that they are not worthy to work on the job. I ask you, is this fair?

As you crisscross the state asking the voters of Massachusetts to endorse you for the highest office in our Commonwealth, it is important that they understand where you stand on many important issues, including the use of PLAs or other union-only tactics often attempted by labor-friendly public officials. The state's open shop construction workforce, who comprise the majority of the industry and as such are key stakeholders in this debate, are eager to learn your position on this important issue.

I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

Ronald N. Cogliano  
President