

## 84th Legislative Session Accomplishments

### Increased Spending for Facility Infrastructure

HB 100 by Rep. John Zerwas of Richmond established bonding authority for over \$3.1 billion in higher education projects, which means more quality work in the state.

The Texas Historical Commission's Historic Courthouse Preservation Program will have \$20 million for the 2015–16 biennium as a result of the passage of HB 1, which is up from \$4.5 million in the 2013–14 biennium.

### Business Tax Relief

Beginning September 1, the \$200 annual architecture license tax surcharge will be eliminated. Future architecture license renewals in Texas will cost \$105, instead of \$305. Additionally, the out-of-state fee will drop from \$400 to \$200.

For firms required to pay the Margins Tax, HB 32 reduced the franchise tax rate by 25 percent.

### Procurement Transparency

Effective September 1, purchasing co-ops must be identified as "interested parties" that stand to benefit from transactions that would otherwise be tantamount to a "no-bid" contract (HB 1295).

Public Private Partnerships, or P3 projects, as determined by HB 2475, will limit how these partnerships are done in one prescribed way, and will no longer come via unsolicited proposals. During the 83rd Legislative Session, design, construction, and maintenance considerations were made of equal importance to the previous "value-for-money" requisite. This method for procuring public projects is now in sync with AIA Model P3 guidelines.

### Business Contract Practices

If executed after September 1, HB 2049 renders a "Duty to Defend" clause in a public entity's design services contract "null and void." Design firms can no longer be required by government clients to assume an obligation to pay uninsurable expenses simply because the public entity demands such a clause be included.

### Codes and Sustainability

We played a key role in preventing passage of SB 1679, which would have made it harder to adopt or amend future building or energy codes.

HB 1736 set up the use of the 2015 International Residential Code (IRC) Energy Provisions for single and dual-family structures in 2016, which should help make the 2015 International Energy Efficiency Code (IECC) the state standard in September 2016.

### Other Recent Gains

In 2011, we pushed the passage of the High Performance Building Standards Bill, or HB 51, requiring public buildings to be built to a nationally recognized (i.e. LEED or Green Globe) or municipally established (i.e. Austin's Green Energy) certification standard.

In 2013, through SB 198, we supported the right of individuals to xeriscape (drought-resistant landscaping) as a water-conserving lawn option without interference from a Home Owners Association. Additionally, we supported the right for cities and counties to finance energy and natural resource conservation improvements through the Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) program established in 2009 with SB 385.