Montana Department of Transportation
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Michael T. Tooley, Director
Steve Bullock, Governor

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MONTANA DIVISION

March 26, 2019

Kevin McLaury
Montana Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
585 Shephard Way
Helena, MT 59601

Subject: Finding of Public Interest
State Furnished Electrical Equipment

Pursuant to 23 CFR 635.407, we are requesting your Finding of Public Interest for the use of state furnished equipment for traffic signal installations statewide by the Montana Department of Transportation. This request also updates MDT's last public interest finding for state furnished signal equipment, approved July 21, 2016.

Background and Benefits

- Some type of state furnished electrical equipment has been used by MDT since as early as 1981. There are significant benefits to MDT and the public realized by MDT supplying signal control equipment, traffic signal poles and emergency preemption equipment. The signal equipment supplied by the state is procured through competitive procedures as required by MDT's Purchasing Services Section, and include Invitations for Bid, Request for Proposal, and Limited Solicitation.
- Benefits of using state supplied signal equipment include expedited project construction and material cost savings. But the primary benefit of MDT furnishing some electrical signal materials is consistency and uniformity of the devices necessary for traffic signal operation.
    - Traffic signal controllers and their software must be from the same manufacturer for effective signal coordination and advanced controller operations. A common platform for signal controllers also improves signal operation and maintenance by requiring personnel throughout the state to be familiar with only one control equipment and software. The Concept of Operations developed from Project SSS STWD(389), AID Demonstration Project also identified MDT's current signal controller and software as the best system proposed for future use by MDT.
    - The uniform traffic signal poles used at signalized intersections allows MDT to stock an inventory of standard pole pieces that can be supplied for any project or for maintenance replacement activities. Having a stock of standard poles can also accommodate construction field changes better than poles ordered specific to each project.

- Standard emergency vehicle preemption equipment accommodates existing preemption emitters installed on emergency vehicles while also enabling the rejection of inappropriate preemption requests from pirate equipment.

- State supplied electrical equipment also allows quicker project construction by removing the manufacturing time of some of the longest lead time items. Lead times for signal control equipment can be six months long, and traffic signal poles routinely take more than six months to fabricate and deliver. Using MDT's supply of these items removes the time required for contractor material submittal and review, as well as the long fabrication times.
- MDT also benefits from material cost savings by furnishing some signal equipment. By making larger purchases of traffic signal poles and signal control equipment, MDT realizes better prices per piece than when equipment is ordered specific to individual projects. Purchases for signal equipment for several projects are much larger and result in lower unit costs than single project purchases.

Conclusion

We believe MDT should continue to provide some state furnished electrical equipment on projects. Any state furnished electrical devices are procured competitively by MDT and made available to contractors for installation. We feel the benefits of uniform signal control equipment, improved project delivery and lower material costs justify approval of this finding of public interest.

MDT continually evaluates the process of furnishing some electrical equipment. We will update our process within three years with a new request for finding of public interest with any potential changes to the process.

Roy Peterson, P.E.
Traffic and Safety Engineer
406-444-9252

FHWA Concurrence _____ Date 6/12/19

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