



August 8, 2005

President Paul J. Van Rooy, Common Council Organizational Committee  
City of Madison  
210 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.  
Madison, WI 53703

Re: Testimony Regarding Madison Lobby Law Change

Dear President Van Rooy:

Ayres Associates operates an engineering office in the City of Madison. We have been members of the Madison business community for more than 40 years. We employ 80 professionals and provide services in transportation, civil, and environmental engineering; photogrammetry; and surveying. Notable projects you may be aware of include construction inspection on the remodeling of East Washington Avenue, aerial photography and mapping of Madison, and design of the new City engineering building. We are honored to play a role in the development of this great city and value our excellent working relationship with City staff.

Having said that, we are equally troubled by the recent action regarding the Madison lobby laws. Our legal counsel has advised us that the lobbying ordinance applies to our activities with City staff. These activities include contractual negotiation, sharing technical knowledge, and professional association activity. We agree with the spirit of the lobbying law *but do not believe that our activity with the City is lobbying*. We do *not* try to influence decisions. We provide consultation, which amounts to sharing professional and technical advice. Many times this advice is solicited by City staff and provided with no fee to the City. Undoubtedly, this relationship provides value to the City, and to constrain it by an ordinance simply makes no sense.

In addition to the dubious aspects of the current ordinance, it should also be noted that compliance with the ordinance would be a complicated process – with adverse effects on the relationship between the City and Ayres Associates. Compliance would involve registering employees of our firm as lobbyists. Ayres Associates has as many as 30 employees who routinely communicate with City staff. It would be a significant financial burden to register all of them as lobbyists and account for and report their activities and expenses quarterly. Although this is a financial burden our firm is willing to accept, as a business, Ayres Associates will need to pass these expenses on to our clients. In other words, the cost to provide services to the City will certainly increase. More importantly, the open professional and technical lines of communication that the City and our company enjoy will be damaged.

Please carefully consider your action on the lobbying law and exempt professional services such as engineering, surveying, and architecture from this ordinance.

Sincerely,

Ayres Associates Inc



Frederick J. Halton, C.P.  
Regional Vice President

Ayres Associates Inc  
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