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June 24, 2005

Michael Nardone
Vice-President/ Principal in Charge
URS Corporation
7650 Corporate Center Drive
Suite 401
Miami, FL 33126

RE: REQUEST FOR ADVISORY OPINION 05-62

Dear Mr. Nardone:

The Commission on Ethics and Public Trust considered your request for an advisory opinion at its meeting on June 23, 2005 and rendered its opinion based on the facts stated in your letter.

You requested an opinion regarding whether the firm can respond to a solicitation for hydraulic computer modeling services for WASD.

In your request, you advised the Ethics Commission that the Office of Capital Improvements Construction Coordination (CICC) recently issued a Notice to Professional Consultants to provide hydraulic modeling services for WASD. The selected consultant will be required to assist the County in the continued development and maintenance of its steady-state and dynamic wastewater system and steady-state waste system hydraulics computer model. The water and wastewater steady state models include pressure lines

and pumping stations. The work may include updating of the water and wastewater system computer models with new pumping and piping facilities, performing and/or assisting in model calibration including the review of calibration procedures, conducting various analyses with the computer models including local system capacity evaluations, operational studies, assisting in the provision of links between the computer models and the WASD SCADA, Geographic Information and Asset Management Systems (GIS) and market review of computer software available for modeling. Local capacity evaluations will be conducted with high priority on residential development in the downtown Miami area.

The current dynamic wastewater computer model used by WASD was developed in the late 90's as a result of a consent decree between the Environmental Protection Agency and WASD. The model is used as part of the Peak Flow Management Plan required by the federal consent decree. The original model was completed using data provided by several WASD contractors and Post Buckley, Schuh & Jerningan (PBSJ) completed the final design.

The current models will be used for long range planning including determining system upgrades to maintain an adequate water system, the need for larger regional facilities to accommodate growth and development of a localized model for areas of high growth and development.

The Notice to Professional Consultants provides that Prime Consultants must identify whether they or any of their subconsultants or members have participated in any way in the development of the dynamic wastewater model currently utilized by WASD including but not limited to model design, model calibration, field testing and/or design construction work. In identifying themselves or any such sub-consultants or members, the Prime Consultant must identify the specific

work that the subconsultant or member performed or work to be performed on the dynamic wastewater computer model currently utilized by WASD.

URS has two employees that worked on the current computer models as employees for PBSJ. Tom Christ and Rizwan Hamid were staff engineers for PBSJ and attended monthly meetings regarding the updating of the computer model. Christ and Hamid also performed additional calibration of the model. Christ also participated in the Peak Flow Study as a member of the Technical Advisory Committee. Finally, Christ and Hamid worked on the wastewater models which were developed by local municipalities with their own sewer system.

URS did not perform any work related to the computer model for WASD.

The Ethics Commission found that URS may provide hydraulic computer modeling services for WASD. The scope of services contemplated under the contract is a continuation of the prior work done by the engineers as PBSJ employees. Accordingly, the work does not constitute a conflict under the Commission opinions finding that a continuation of prior work does not constitute a conflict.

In a series of opinions, the Ethics Commission has opined that certain contractual arrangements create an inherent conflict of interest and should be determined prior to award. For example, a conflict exists if a contractor has overlapping responsibilities on different phases of the same project (i.e. AE on one phase of the project and serving as value engineer, CIS or CM partner on another phase of the project; supervisor or prime on one phase of the project and subcontractor on another or related phase or project). Further a conflict may exist if there are overlapping roles or responsibilities between two related

contracts. These arrangements create conflict because they lead to disclosure of confidential information and impair independent judgment by the contractor in the performance of its contractual obligations.

URS does not have any of the conflicts enumerated above. The prior work done by the engineers as PBSJ employees does not conflict with the scope of work under the current contract. Therefore, URS may provide hydraulic computer modeling services for WASD.

This opinion construes the Miami-Dade Conflict of Interest and Code of Ethics ordinance only and is not applicable to any conflict under state law. Please contact the State of Florida Commission on Ethics if you have any questions regarding possible conflicts under state law.

If you have any questions regarding this opinion, please call the undersigned at (305) 579-2594 or Ardyth Walker, Staff General Counsel at (305) 350-0616.

Sincerely Yours,



ROBERT MEYERS
Executive Director

cc: Fernando Ponassi, CICC
Christopher Mazzella, Inspector General