
Coates' Canons Blog: Local Preferences in Public Contracting, Part 2

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In [my last post](#), I talked about the efforts of the City Council of Emerald City, North Carolina, to support its local businesses by adopting a local preference policy. We now rejoin our friends in Emerald City, where the City Council has asked Purchasing Officer Scarecrow to research what goals a preference policy might achieve. (This is number four on the list of “questions to consider” that I provided in my last post—but the answer to this question will provide a necessary context for the answers to the remaining questions.) Scarecrow is now ready to report back to the Council.

Let’s listen in on the Scarecrow’s report...

“The Council stated three goals of this proposed policy during the last Council meeting: first, to reduce local unemployment, second, to support local businesses, and, finally, to increase Emerald City’s tax base. I’ve been putting my new brain to work trying to figure out what our policy would have to do in order to meet these goals, and that’s what I’ll share with you today.

“First, to reduce unemployment, our policy would have to have the effect of creating more jobs for local workers in addition to retaining current jobs held by local workers.

“As for the second goal, supporting local businesses, there are two kinds of ‘support’ that were discussed at last month’s meeting. One is financial support. To achieve this goal, our policy would have to have the effect of directing more money to local businesses. The other type of support is political or moral support. To achieve this goal, our policy would have to have the effect of showing local businesses that we are taking concrete actions to assist them.

“Finally, there’s the goal of increasing Emerald City’s tax base. To achieve this goal, our policy would have to have the effect of increasing property taxes and sales taxes in the City. In other words, the policy would have to encourage people to spend money with local businesses and to buy property in the City.”

Councilman Lion broke in. “There’s a fourth goal, too. I’ve heard that a ‘buy local’ policy will reduce the city’s carbon footprint. It’s the green thing to do, and even I’m not afraid to say that it’s also the right thing to do! This is Emerald City, after all.”

“Thank you for that point, Councilman Lion,” responded Scarecrow. “My new brain tells me that for our policy to meet the goal of reducing the city’s carbon footprint, our policy would have to have the effect of cutting down on transportation costs for the goods and services that the City spends money on. Is that what you mean?” Councilman Lion nodded affirmatively.

Scarecrow turned to the rest of the Council, “So now I’ll close with two questions:

1. Do you agree with my analysis of what our policy will have to do in order to achieve the goals of reducing unemployment, supporting local businesses, increasing the City’s tax base, and reducing our carbon footprint?
2. Are there any other goals that you’d like to achieve through this policy?”

And I’ll close Part 2 by turning those same questions over to you. Please add your comments to this post (note that your comments will not appear until I approve them), or email me directly [here](#).



Thank you in advance for participating in this discussion.

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