

SENATE BILL NO. 254—SENATORS FARLEY,
HARDY, HARRIS; AND SETTELMAYER

MARCH 12, 2015

Referred to Committee on Government Affairs

SUMMARY—Revises provisions relating to public works.
(BDR 28-791)

FISCAL NOTE: Effect on Local Government: May have Fiscal Impact.
Effect on the State: Yes.

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EXPLANATION – Matter in *bolded italics* is new; matter between brackets [omitted material] is material to be omitted.

AN ACT relating to public works; amending the amount of retainage authorized on public works and certain other works; extending existing provisions related to retainage; and providing other matters properly relating thereto.

Legislative Counsel's Digest:

Existing law requires a public body undertaking a public work to withhold as a retainage at least 5 percent from progress payments made to a contractor during the first half of the project. After completion of half of the project, the amount of the retainage becomes optional and any remaining progress payments or withheld retainage may be paid. (NRS 338.515) **Section 2** of this bill requires the amount of the retainage to be 5 percent.

Existing law provides that in private construction projects, not more than 10 percent of progress payments may be withheld from such payments by an owner to a contractor and from a contractor to a subcontractor, and that such funds must be paid upon satisfaction of certain criteria including the issuance of a certificate of occupancy by a building inspector. (NRS 624.609, 624.620, 624.624) **Sections 3 and 5** of this bill reduce the amount of retainage allowed from 10 percent to 5 percent. **Section 4** of this bill requires that retained funds be paid upon the issuance of a temporary certificate of occupancy. Finally, **section 6** of this bill repeals the expiration of certain provisions of existing law pertaining to retainage in public works which are set to expire on July 1, 2015. (NRS 338.515, 338.530, 338.555, 338.560, 338.595)

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEVADA, REPRESENTED IN
SENATE AND ASSEMBLY, DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. (Deleted by amendment.)



* S B 2 5 4 R 1 *

Sec. 2. NRS 338.515 is hereby amended to read as follows:

338.515 1. Except as otherwise provided in NRS 338.525, a public body and its officers or agents awarding a contract for a public work shall pay or cause to be paid to a contractor the progress payments due under the contract within 30 days after the date the public body receives the progress bill or within a shorter period if the provisions of the contract so provide. ~~[Not more than 95]~~ *Ninety five* percent of the amount of any progress payment ~~[may]~~ *must* be paid *and 5 percent withheld as retainage* until 50 percent of the work required by the contract has been performed.

2. After 50 percent of the work required by the contract has been performed, the public body may pay to the contractor:

(a) Any of the remaining progress payments without withholding additional retainage; and

(b) Any amount of any retainage that was withheld from progress payments pursuant to subsection 1,
↳ if, in the opinion of the public body, satisfactory progress is being made in the work.

3. After determining in accordance with subsection 2 whether satisfactory progress is being made in the work, the public body may pay to the contractor an amount of any retainage that was withheld from progress payments pursuant to subsection 1 if:

(a) A subcontractor has performed a portion of the work;

(b) *The contractor has determined that satisfactory progress is being made in the work under the subcontract with the subcontractor pursuant to NRS 338.555;*

(c) The public body determines that the portion of the work has been completed in compliance with all applicable plans and specifications;

~~[(e)]~~ (d) The subcontractor submits to the contractor:

(1) A release of the subcontractor's claim for a mechanic's lien for the portion of the work; and

(2) From each of the subcontractor's subcontractors and suppliers who performed work or provided material for the portion of the work, a release of his or her claim for a mechanic's lien for the portion of the work; and

~~[(d)]~~ (e) The amount of the retainage which the public body pays is in proportion to the portion of the work which the subcontractor has performed.

4. If, after determining in accordance with subsection 2 whether satisfactory progress is being made in the work, the public body continues to withhold retainage from remaining progress payments:

(a) If the public body does not withhold any amount pursuant to NRS 338.525:



(1) The public body may not withhold more than 2.5 percent of the amount of any progress payment; and

(2) Before withholding any amount pursuant to subparagraph (1), the public body must pay to the contractor 50 percent of the amount of any retainage that was withheld from progress payments pursuant to subsection 1; or

(b) If the public body withholds any amount pursuant to NRS 338.525:

(1) The public body may not withhold more than 5 percent of the amount of any progress payment; and

(2) The public body may continue to retain the amount of any retainage that was withheld from progress payments pursuant to subsection 1.

5. Except as otherwise provided in NRS 338.525, a public body shall identify in the contract and pay or cause to be paid to a contractor the actual cost of the supplies, materials and equipment that:

(a) Are identified in the contract;

(b) Have been delivered and stored at a location, and in the time and manner, specified in a contract by the contractor or a subcontractor or supplier for use in a public work; and

(c) Are in short supply or were specially made for the public work,

↳ within 30 days after the public body receives a progress bill from the contractor for those supplies, materials or equipment.

6. A public body shall pay or cause to be paid to the contractor at the end of each quarter interest for the quarter on any amount withheld by the public body pursuant to NRS 338.400 to 338.645, inclusive, at a rate equal to the rate quoted by at least three insured banks, credit unions or savings and loan associations in this State as the highest rate paid on a certificate of deposit whose duration is approximately 90 days on the first day of the quarter. If the amount due to a contractor pursuant to this subsection for any quarter is less than \$500, the public body may hold the interest until:

(a) The end of a subsequent quarter after which the amount of interest due is \$500 or more;

(b) The end of the fourth consecutive quarter for which no interest has been paid to the contractor; or

(c) The amount withheld under the contract is due pursuant to NRS 338.520,

↳ whichever occurs first.

7. If the Labor Commissioner has reason to believe that a worker is owed wages by a contractor or subcontractor, the Labor Commissioner may require the public body to withhold from any payment due the contractor under this section and pay the Labor



Commissioner instead, an amount equal to the amount the Labor Commissioner believes the contractor owes to the worker. This amount must be paid by the Labor Commissioner to the worker if the matter is resolved in the worker's favor, otherwise it must be returned to the public body for payment to the contractor.

Sec. 3. NRS 624.609 is hereby amended to read as follows:

624.609 1. Except as otherwise provided in subsections 2 and 4 and subsection 4 of NRS 624.622, if an owner of real property enters into a written or oral agreement with a prime contractor for the performance of work or the provision of materials or equipment by the prime contractor, the owner must:

(a) Pay the prime contractor on or before the date a payment is due pursuant to a schedule for payments established in a written agreement; or

(b) If no such schedule is established or if the agreement is oral, pay the prime contractor within 21 days after the date the prime contractor submits a request for payment.

2. If an owner has complied with subsection 3, the owner may:

(a) Withhold from any payment to be made to the prime contractor:

(1) A retention amount that, if the owner is authorized to withhold a retention amount pursuant to the agreement, must not exceed ~~10~~ 5 percent of the amount of the payment to be made;

(2) An amount equal to the sum of the value of:

(I) Any work or labor that has not been performed or materials or equipment that has not been furnished for which payment is being sought, unless the agreement otherwise allows or requires such a payment to be made; and

(II) Costs and expenses reasonably necessary to correct or repair any work which is the subject of the request for payment and which is not materially in compliance with the agreement to the extent that such costs and expenses exceed 50 percent of the retention amount withheld pursuant to subparagraph (1); and

(3) The amount the owner has paid or is required to pay pursuant to an official notice from a state agency or employee benefit trust fund, for which the owner is or may reasonably be liable for the prime contractor or his or her lower-tiered subcontractors in accordance with chapter 608, 612, 616A to 616D, inclusive, or 617 of NRS; and

(b) Require as a condition precedent to the payment of any amount due, lien releases furnished by the prime contractor and his or her lower-tiered subcontractors and suppliers in accordance with the provisions of paragraphs (a) and (c) of subsection 5 of NRS 108.2457.



3. If, pursuant to subparagraph (2) or (3) of paragraph (a) of subsection 2 or paragraph (b) of subsection 2, an owner intends to withhold any amount from a payment to be made to a prime contractor, the owner must give, on or before the date the payment is due, a written notice to the prime contractor of any amount that will be withheld. The written notice of withholding must:

(a) Identify the amount of the request for payment that will be withheld from the prime contractor;

(b) Give a reasonably detailed explanation of the condition or the reason the owner will withhold that amount, including, without limitation, a specific reference to the provision or section of the agreement, and any documents relating thereto, and the applicable building code, law or regulation with which the prime contractor has failed to comply; and

(c) Be signed by an authorized agent of the owner.

4. A prime contractor who receives a notice of withholding pursuant to subsection 3 or a notice of objection pursuant to subparagraph (2) of paragraph (b) may:

(a) Give the owner a written notice and thereby dispute in good faith and for reasonable cause the amount withheld, or the condition or reason for the withholding; or

(b) Correct any condition or reason for the withholding described in the notice of withholding and thereafter provide written notice to the owner of the correction of the condition or reason for the withholding. The notice of correction must be sufficient to identify the scope and manner of the correction of the condition or reason for the withholding and be signed by an authorized representative of the prime contractor. If an owner receives a written notice from the prime contractor of the correction of a condition or reason for the withholding pursuant to this paragraph, the owner shall:

(1) Pay the amount withheld by the owner for that condition or reason for the withholding on or before the date the next payment is due the prime contractor; or

(2) Object to the scope and manner of the correction of the condition or reason for the withholding, on or before the date the next payment is due to the prime contractor, in a written statement which sets forth the condition or reason for the objection and which complies with subsection 3. If the owner objects to the scope and manner of the correction of a condition or reason for the withholding, the owner shall nevertheless pay to the prime contractor, along with the payment to be made pursuant to the prime contractor's next payment request, the amount withheld for the correction of the condition or reason for the withholding to which the owner no longer objects.



5. Except as otherwise allowed in subsections 2, 3 and 4, an owner shall not withhold from a payment to be made to a prime contractor more than the retention amount.

Sec. 4. NRS 624.620 is hereby amended to read as follows:

624.620 1. Except as otherwise provided in this section, any money remaining unpaid for the construction of a work of improvement is payable to the prime contractor within 30 days after:

(a) Occupancy or use of the work of improvement by the owner or by a person acting with the authority of the owner; or

(b) The availability of a work of improvement for its intended use. The prime contractor must have provided to the owner:

(1) A written notice of availability on or before the day on which the prime contractor claims that the work of improvement became available for use or occupancy; or

(2) A certificate of occupancy *or temporary certificate of occupancy* issued by the appropriate building inspector or other authority.

2. If the owner has complied with subsection 3, the owner may:

(a) Withhold payment for the amount of:

(1) Any work or labor that has not been performed or materials or equipment that has not been furnished for which payment is sought;

(2) The costs and expenses reasonably necessary to correct or repair any work that is not materially in compliance with the agreement to the extent that such costs and expenses exceed 50 percent of the amount of retention being withheld pursuant to the terms of the agreement; and

(3) Money the owner has paid or is required to pay pursuant to an official notice from a state agency, or employee benefit trust fund, for which the owner is liable for the prime contractor or his or her lower-tiered subcontractors in accordance with chapter 608, 612, 616A to 616D, inclusive, or 617 of NRS.

(b) Require, as a condition precedent to the payment of any unpaid amount under the agreement, that lien releases be furnished by the prime contractor and his or her lower-tiered subcontractors and suppliers in accordance with the provisions of paragraphs (a) and (c) of subsection 5 of NRS 108.2457.

3. If, pursuant to paragraph (a) of subsection 2, an owner intends to withhold any amount from a payment to be made to a prime contractor, the owner must, on or before the date the payment is due, give written notice to the prime contractor of any amount that will be withheld. The written notice of withholding must:

(a) Identify the amount that will be withheld from the prime contractor;



(b) Give a reasonably detailed explanation of the condition for which or the reason the owner will withhold that amount, including, without limitation, a specific reference to the provision or section of the agreement with the prime contractor, and any documents relating thereto, and the applicable building code, law or regulation with which the prime contractor has failed to comply; and

(c) Be signed by an authorized agent of the owner.

4. A prime contractor who receives a notice of withholding pursuant to subsection 3 may correct any condition or reason for the withholding described in the notice of withholding and thereafter provide written notice to the owner of the correction of the condition or reason for the withholding. The notice of correction must be sufficient to identify the scope and manner of the correction of the condition or reason for the withholding and be signed by an authorized representative of the prime contractor. If an owner receives a written notice from the prime contractor of the correction of a condition or reason for the withholding described in an owner's notice of withholding pursuant to subsection 3, the owner must, within 10 days after receipt of such notice:

(a) Pay the amount withheld by the owner for that condition or reason for the withholding; or

(b) Object to the scope and manner of the correction of the condition or reason for the withholding in a written statement that sets forth the reason for the objection and complies with subsection 3. If the owner objects to the scope and manner of the correction of a condition or reason for the withholding, the owner shall nevertheless pay to the prime contractor, along with the payment to be made pursuant to the prime contractor's next payment request, the amount withheld for the correction of the condition or reason for the withholding to which the owner no longer objects.

5. The partial occupancy or availability of a building requires payment in direct proportion to the value of the part of the building which is partially occupied or partially available. For works of improvement which involve more than one building, each building must be considered separately in determining the amount of money which is payable to the prime contractor.

Sec. 5. NRS 624.624 is hereby amended to read as follows:

624.624 1. Except as otherwise provided in this section, if a higher-tiered contractor enters into:

(a) A written agreement with a lower-tiered subcontractor that includes a schedule for payments, the higher-tiered contractor shall pay the lower-tiered subcontractor:

(1) On or before the date payment is due; or

(2) Within 10 days after the date the higher-tiered contractor receives payment for all or a portion of the work, materials or



equipment described in a request for payment submitted by the lower-tiered subcontractor,

↳ whichever is earlier.

(b) A written agreement with a lower-tiered subcontractor that does not contain a schedule for payments, or an agreement that is oral, the higher-tiered contractor shall pay the lower-tiered subcontractor:

(1) Within 30 days after the date the lower-tiered subcontractor submits a request for payment; or

(2) Within 10 days after the date the higher-tiered contractor receives payment for all or a portion of the work, labor, materials, equipment or services described in a request for payment submitted by the lower-tiered subcontractor,

↳ whichever is earlier.

2. If a higher-tiered contractor has complied with subsection 3, the higher-tiered contractor may:

(a) Withhold from any payment owed to the lower-tiered subcontractor:

(1) A retention amount that the higher-tiered contractor is authorized to withhold pursuant to the agreement, but the retention amount withheld must not exceed ~~10~~ 5 percent of the payment that is required pursuant to subsection 1;

(2) An amount equal to the sum of the value of:

(I) Any work or labor that has not been performed or materials or equipment that has not been furnished for which payment is being sought, unless the agreement otherwise allows or requires such a payment to be made; and

(II) Costs and expenses reasonably necessary to correct or repair any work which is the subject of the request for payment and which is not materially in compliance with the agreement to the extent that such costs and expenses exceed 50 percent of the retention amount withheld pursuant to subparagraph (1); and

(3) The amount the owner or higher-tiered contractor has paid or is required to pay pursuant to an official notice from a state agency or employee benefit trust fund, for which the owner or higher-tiered contractor is or may reasonably be liable for the lower-tiered subcontractor or his or her lower-tiered subcontractors in accordance with chapter 608, 612, 616A to 616D, inclusive, or 617 of NRS; and

(b) Require as a condition precedent to the payment of any amount due, lien releases furnished by the lower-tiered subcontractor and his or her lower-tiered subcontractors and suppliers in accordance with the provisions of paragraphs (a) and (c) of subsection 5 of NRS 108.2457.



3. If, pursuant to subparagraph (2) or (3) of paragraph (a) of subsection 2 or paragraph (b) of subsection 2, a higher-tiered contractor intends to withhold any amount from a payment to be made to a lower-tiered subcontractor, the higher-tiered contractor must give, on or before the date the payment is due, a written notice to the lower-tiered subcontractor of any amount that will be withheld and give a copy of such notice to all reputed higher-tiered contractors and the owner. The written notice of withholding must:

(a) Identify the amount of the request for payment that will be withheld from the lower-tiered subcontractor;

(b) Give a reasonably detailed explanation of the condition or the reason the higher-tiered contractor will withhold that amount, including, without limitation, a specific reference to the provision or section of the agreement with the lower-tiered subcontractor, and any documents relating thereto, and the applicable building code, law or regulation with which the lower-tiered subcontractor has failed to comply; and

(c) Be signed by an authorized agent of the higher-tiered contractor.

4. A lower-tiered subcontractor who receives a notice of withholding pursuant to subsection 3 or a notice of objection pursuant to subparagraph (2) of paragraph (b) may:

(a) Give the higher-tiered contractor a written notice and thereby dispute in good faith and for reasonable cause the amount withheld or the conditions or reasons for the withholding; or

(b) Correct any condition or reason for the withholding described in the notice of withholding and thereafter provide written notice to the higher-tiered contractor of the correction of the condition or reason for the withholding. The notice of correction must be sufficient to identify the scope and manner of the correction of the condition or reason for the withholding and be signed by an authorized representative of the lower-tiered subcontractor. If a higher-tiered contractor receives a written notice from the lower-tiered subcontractor of the correction of a condition or reason for the withholding pursuant to this paragraph, the higher-tiered contractor shall:

(1) Pay the amount withheld by the higher-tiered contractor for that condition or reason for the withholding on or before the date the next payment is due the lower-tiered subcontractor; or

(2) Object to the scope and manner of the correction of the condition or reason for the withholding, on or before the date the next payment is due to the lower-tiered subcontractor, in a written statement which sets forth the condition or reason for the objection and which complies with subsection 3. If the higher-tiered contractor objects to the scope and manner of the correction of a



condition or reason for the withholding, the higher-tiered contractor shall nevertheless pay to the lower-tiered subcontractor, along with payment to be made pursuant to the lower-tiered subcontractor's next payment request, the amount withheld for the correction of the conditions or reasons for the withholding to which the higher-tiered contractor no longer objects.

5. Except as otherwise allowed in subsections 2, 3 and 4, a higher-tiered contractor shall not withhold from a payment to be made to a lower-tiered subcontractor more than the retention amount.

Sec. 6. Section 6 of chapter 289, Statutes of Nevada 2011, at page 1624, is hereby amended to read as follows:

Sec. 6. This act becomes effective on October 1, 2011 .

~~[, and expires by limitation on July 1, 2015.]~~

Sec. 7. The amendatory provisions of this act do not apply to the provisions of any contract entered into before January 1, 2016.

Sec. 8. 1. This section and section 6 of this act become effective upon passage and approval.

2. Sections 1 to 5, inclusive, and 7 of this act become effective on January 1, 2016.

