

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
PROVIDENCE, SC

SUPERIOR COURT
PC-2024-04526

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND,)
)
Plaintiff,)
)
v.)
)
AECOM TECHNICAL SERVICES, INC.,)
AETNA BRIDGE COMPANY,)
ARIES SUPPORT SERVICES, INC.)
BARLETTA HEAVY DIVISION, INC.)
BARLETTA/AETNA I-195 WASHINGTON)
BRIDGE NORTH PHASE 2 JV,)
COLLINS ENGINEERS, INC.,)
COMMONWEALTH ENGINEERS &)
CONSULTANTS, INC.,)
JACOBS ENGINEERING GROUP, INC.)
MICHAEL BAKER INTERNATIONAL, INC.)
PRIME AE GROUP, INC.)
STEERE ENGINEERING, INC.,)
TRANSYSTEMS CORPORATION, and)
VANASSE HANGEN BRUSTLIN, INC.,)
)
Defendants.)

STEERE ENGINEERING, INC.’S ANSWER TO THE PLAINTIFF STATE OF RHODE ISLAND’S COMPLAINT

Defendant Steere Engineering, Inc. (“Steere”), by and through counsel, hereby answer Plaintiff the State of Rhode Island’s (the “State”) Complaint, paragraph by paragraph, as follows:

INTRODUCTION

Steere denies the allegations contained in the first sentence of the first paragraph of the Introduction. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations contained in the second sentence of the first paragraph of the Introduction.

Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations contained in the first sentence of the second paragraph of the Introduction. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations contained in the second sentence of the second paragraph of the Introduction to the extent they allege Steere knew what other defendants knew or should have known. Steere denies the remaining allegations set forth in the second sentence of the second paragraph of the Introduction.

Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations in the third paragraph of the Introduction.

Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations in the fourth paragraph of the Introduction.

Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations in the fifth paragraph of the Introduction.

The sixth paragraph of the Introduction purports to characterize the State's Complaint, a document which speaks for itself. To the extent a response is deemed required, denied.

PARTIES

A. The Plaintiff

1. Admitted

B. The Defendants

2. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 2.

3. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 3.

4. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 4.

5. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 5.

6. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 6.

7. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 7.

8. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 8.

9. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 9.

10. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 10.

11. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 11.

12. Admitted.

13. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 12.

14. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 13.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

15. The allegations set forth in ¶ 15 of the Complaint purport to state a legal conclusion to which no responsive pleading is required. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, denied.

16. The allegations set forth in ¶ 16 of the Complaint purport to state a legal conclusion to which no responsive pleading is required. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, denied.

17. The allegations set forth in ¶ 17 of the Complaint purport to state a legal conclusion to which no responsive pleading is required. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, denied.

FACTS

A. The Design and Construction of the Washington Bridge

18. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 18.

19. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 19.

20. The allegations set forth in ¶ 20 purport to characterize the original design and/or configuration of the Washington Bridge to which Steere was not involved and exceeds the scope of Steere's involvement, therefore, no responsive pleading is necessary or required.

21. The allegations set forth in ¶ 21 purport to characterize the original design and/or configuration of the Washington Bridge to which Steere was not involved and exceeds the scope of Steere's involvement, therefore, no responsive pleading is necessary or required.

22. The allegations set forth in ¶ 22 purport to characterize the original design and/or configuration of the Washington Bridge to which Steere was not involved and exceeds the scope of Steere's involvement, therefore, no responsive pleading is necessary or required.

23. The allegations set forth in ¶ 23 purport to characterize the original design and/or configuration of the Washington Bridge to which Steere was not involved and exceeds the scope of Steere's involvement, therefore, no responsive pleading is necessary or required.

24. The allegations set forth in ¶ 24 purport to characterize the original design and/or configuration of the Washington Bridge to which Steere was not involved and exceeds the scope of Steere's involvement, therefore, no responsive pleading is necessary or required.

25. The allegations set forth in ¶ 25 purport to characterize the original design and/or configuration of the Washington Bridge to which Steere was not involved and exceeds the scope of Steere's involvement, therefore, no responsive pleading is necessary or required.

26. The allegations set forth in ¶ 26 purport to characterize the original design and/or configuration of the Washington Bridge to which Steere was not involved and exceeds the scope of Steere's involvement, therefore, no responsive pleading is necessary or required.

27. The allegations set forth in ¶ 27 purport to characterize the original design and/or configuration of the Washington Bridge to which Steere was not involved and exceeds the scope of Steere's involvement, therefore, no responsive pleading is necessary or required.

28. The allegations set forth in ¶ 28 purport to characterize the original design and/or configuration of the Washington Bridge to which Steere was not involved and exceeds the scope of Steere's involvement, therefore, no responsive pleading is necessary or required.

29. The allegations set forth in ¶ 29 purport to characterize the original design and/or configuration of the Washington Bridge to which Steere was not involved and exceeds the scope of Steere's involvement, therefore, no responsive pleading is necessary or required.

30. The allegations set forth in ¶ 30 purport to characterize the original design and/or configuration of the Washington Bridge to which Steere was not involved and exceeds the scope of Steere's involvement, therefore, no responsive pleading is necessary or required.

31. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 31.

32. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 32.

B. The Lichtenstein Report

33. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 33.

34. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 34.

35. The allegations set forth in ¶ 35 purport to characterize a report which speaks for itself, and therefore no responsive pleading is necessary or required. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 35.

36. The allegations set forth in ¶ 36 purport to characterize a report which speaks for itself, and therefore no responsive pleading is necessary or required. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 36.

37. The allegations set forth in ¶ 37 purport to characterize a report which speaks for itself, and therefore no responsive pleading is necessary or required. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 37.

38. The allegations set forth in ¶ 38 purport to characterize a report which speaks for itself, and therefore no responsive pleading is necessary or required. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 38.

39. The allegations set forth in ¶ 39 purport to characterize a report which speaks for itself, and therefore no responsive pleading is necessary or required. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 39.

C. The 1996-1998 Rehabilitation of the Washington Bridge

40. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 40.

41. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 41.

D. The 2011 MBI Inspection

42. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 42.

43. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 43.

44. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 44.

45. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 45.

E. The State Engages AECOM for the Complete Design

46. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 46.

47. The allegations set forth in ¶ 47 of the Complaint purport to characterize a document which speaks for itself, and therefore no responsive pleading is necessary or required. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 47.

48. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 48.

49. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 49.

50. The allegations set forth in ¶ 50 of the Complaint purport to characterize a document which speaks for itself, and therefore no responsive pleading is necessary or required. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 50.

51. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 51.

a. The allegations set forth in ¶ 51(a) of the Complaint purport to characterize a document which speaks for itself, and therefore no responsive pleading is necessary or required.

To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 51(a).

b. The allegations set forth in ¶ 51(b) of the Complaint purport to characterize a document which speaks for itself, and therefore no responsive pleading is necessary or required. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 5(b).

52. The allegations set forth in ¶ 52 of the Complaint purport to characterize a document which speaks for itself, and therefore no responsive pleading is necessary or required. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 52.

53. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 53.

54. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 54.

55. The allegations set forth in ¶ 54 of the Complaint purport to characterize a document which speaks for itself, and therefore no responsive pleading is necessary or required. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 54.

a. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 55(a).

b. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 55(b).

c. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 55(c).

56. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 56.

57. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 57.

58. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 58.

59. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 59.

60. Admitted to the extent that Steere was engaged as a subconsultant to AECOM in 2014. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the remaining allegations set forth in ¶ 60.

F. AECOM Inspects the Washington Bridge and Transmits Its Technical Evaluation Report and Its Inspection Report

61. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 61.

G. RIDOT Receives and Relies on AECOM's Final Construction Plans

62. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 62.

63. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 63.

64. Admitted to the extent that Steere provided design work as a subconsultant to AECOM. Steere is without information or knowledge sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the remaining allegations set forth in ¶ 64.

65. Denied.

H. The Cardi Corporation Contract

66. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 66.

67. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 67.

I. Other Inspections of the Washington Bridge

68. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 68.

69. Denied to the extent the allegations set forth in ¶ 69 are directed to Steere. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the remaining allegations set forth in ¶ 69.

70. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 70.

71. Denied to the extent the Complaint alleges the condition of the Washington Bridge was known. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the remaining allegations set forth in ¶ 71.

72. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 72.

73. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 73.

a. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 73(a).

b. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 73(b).

c. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 73(c).

d. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 73(d).

e. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 73(e).

f. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 73(f).

g. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 73(g).

h. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 73(h).

i. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 73(i).

74. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 74.

75. Denied to the extent the allegations set forth in ¶ 75 are directed to Steere. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 75.

J. A Second Attempt at Rehabilitation of the Washington Bridge: A Design-Build Rehabilitation Project

76. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 76.

77. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 77.

K. The Joint Venture Embarks on the Design-Build of the Washington Bridge

78. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 78.

79. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 79.

80. The allegations set forth in ¶ 80 of the Complaint purport to characterize a document which speaks for itself, and therefore no responsive pleading is necessary or required. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 80.

81. The allegations set forth in ¶ 81 of the Complaint purport to characterize a document which speaks for itself, and therefore no responsive pleading is necessary or required. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 81.

82. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 82.

83. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 83.

84. The allegations set forth in ¶ 84 of the Complaint purport to characterize a document which speaks for itself, and therefore no responsive pleading is necessary or required. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 84.

85. The allegations set forth in ¶ 85 of the Complaint purport to characterize a document which speaks for itself, and therefore no responsive pleading is necessary or required. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 85.

86. The allegations set forth in ¶ 86 of the Complaint purport to characterize a document which speaks for itself, and therefore no responsive pleading is necessary or required. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 86.

87. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 87.

88. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 88.

89. The allegations set forth in ¶ 89 of the Complaint purport to characterize a document which speaks for itself, and therefore no responsive pleading is necessary or required. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 89.

90. Denied to the extent that ¶ 90 of the Complaint alleges Steere made any promises to RIDOT or the State. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 90.

91. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 91.

L. The Emergency Closure of the Washington Bridge

92. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 92.

93. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 93.

94. Admitted to the extent that RIDOT closed the Washington Bridge. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to what RIDOT based its decision upon.

95. Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 95.

CAUSES OF ACTION

COUNT I
Breach of Contract (2014)
AECOM

96. Steere repeats and incorporates by reference its answers to Paragraphs 1-95 above.

97. Paragraph 97 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 97.

98. Paragraph 98 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 98.

99. Paragraph 99 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 99.

COUNT II
Negligence
AECOM, Steere, Prime, and Aries Support Services

100. Steere repeats and incorporates by reference its answers to Paragraphs 1-99 above.

101. Denied.

102. Denied.

103. Denied.

104. Denied.

105. Denied.

COUNT III
Negligence
Commonwealth Engineers (2019 and 2023 Inspections)

106. Steere repeats and incorporates by reference its answers to Paragraphs 1-105 above.

107. Paragraph 107 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 107.

108. Paragraph 108 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 108.

109. Paragraph 109 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 109.

110. Paragraph 110 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 110.

COUNT IV
Breach of Contract (2019)
AECOM

111. Steere repeats and incorporates by reference its answers to Paragraphs 1-110 above.

112. Paragraph 112 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 112.

113. Paragraph 113 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 113.

114. Paragraph 114 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 114.

COUNT V
Breach of Fiduciary Duty
AECOM

115. Steere repeats and incorporates by reference its answers to Paragraphs 1-114 above.

116. Paragraph 116 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 116.

117. Paragraph 117 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 117.

118. Paragraph 118 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 118.

119. Paragraph 119 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 119.

120. Paragraph 120 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 120.

121. Paragraph 121 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 121.

COUNT VI
Breach of Contract
TransSystems (2016 and 2022 Inspections)

122. Steere repeats and incorporates by reference its answers to Paragraphs 1-121 above.

123. Paragraph 123 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 123.

124. Paragraph 124 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 124.

125. Paragraph 125 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 125.

126. Paragraph 126 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 126.

COUNT VII
Negligence
TransSystems (2016 and 2022 Inspections)

127. Steere repeats and incorporates by reference its answers to Paragraphs 1-126 above.

128. Paragraph 128 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 128.

129. Paragraph 129 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 129.

130. Paragraph 130 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 130.

COUNT VIII
Breach of Contract
Colins (2017 Inspection)

131. Steere repeats and incorporates by reference its answers to Paragraphs 1-130 above.

132. Paragraph 132 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 132.

133. Paragraph 133 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 133.

134. Paragraph 134 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 134.

135. Paragraph 135 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 135.

COUNT IX
Negligence
Collins (2017 Inspection)

136. Steere repeats and incorporates by reference its answers to Paragraphs 1-135 above.

137. Paragraph 137 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 137.

138. Paragraph 138 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 138.

139. Paragraph 139 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 139.

COUNT X
Breach of Contract
AECOM (2017, 2019, 2020, 2023 Inspections)

140. Steere repeats and incorporates by reference its answers to Paragraphs 1-139 above.

141. Paragraph 141 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 141.

142. Paragraph 142 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 142.

143. Paragraph 143 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 143.

144. Paragraph 144 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 144.

COUNT XI
Breach of Contract
MBI (2018 Inspection)

145. Steere repeats and incorporates by reference its answers to Paragraphs 1-144 above.

146. Paragraph 146 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 146.

147. Paragraph 147 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 147.

148. Paragraph 148 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 148.

149. Paragraph 149 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 149.

COUNT XII
Negligence
MBI (2018 Inspection)

150. Steere repeats and incorporates by reference its answers to Paragraphs 1-149 above.

151. Paragraph 151 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 151.

152. Paragraph 152 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 152.

153. Paragraph 153 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 153.

COUNTXIII
Breach of Contract
Jacobs Engineering (2021 Inspection)

154. Steere repeats and incorporates by reference its answers to Paragraphs 1-153 above.

155. Paragraph 155 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 155.

156. Paragraph 156 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 156.

157. Paragraph 157 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 157.

158. Paragraph 158 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 158.

COUNT XIV
Negligence
Jacobs Engineering (2021 Inspection)

159. Steere repeats and incorporates by reference its answers to Paragraphs 1-158.

160. Paragraph 160 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 160.

161. Paragraph 161 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 161.

162. Paragraph 162 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 162.

COUNT XV
Breach of Contract
The Joint Venture, Barletta, and Aetna (2021 Desing-Build Contract)

163. Steere repeats and incorporates by reference its answers to Paragraphs 1-162 above.

164. Paragraph 164 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 164.

165. Paragraph 165 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 165.

166. Paragraph 166 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 166.

167. Paragraph 167 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 167.

COUNT XVI

Negligence

The Joint Venture, Barletta, Aetna, VHB, and Commonwealth Engineers

168. Steere repeats and incorporates by reference its answers to Paragraphs 1-168 above.

169. Paragraph 169 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 169.

170. Paragraph 170 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 170.

171. Paragraph 171 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 171.

172. Paragraph 172 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 172.

COUNT XVII

Contractual Indemnity

AECOM, Aetna, Barletta, and the Joint Venture

173. Steere repeats and incorporates by reference its answers to Paragraphs 1-172.

174. Paragraph 174 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 174.

175. Paragraph 175 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 175.

176. Paragraph 176 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 176.

177. Paragraph 177 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 177.

178. Paragraph 178 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 178.

COUNT XVIII
Declaratory Judgment Regarding Contractual Indemnity
AECOM, Aetna, Barletta, and the Joint Venture

179. Steere repeats and incorporates by reference its answers to Paragraphs 1-178 above.

180. Paragraph 180 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 180.

181. Paragraph 181 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 181.

182. Paragraph 182 of the Complaint concerns a party other than Steere such that no responsive pleading is necessary. To the extent a responsive pleading is deemed required, Steere is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations set forth in ¶ 182.

COUNT XIX
Declaratory Judgment Regarding Non-Contractual Indemnity
All Defendants

183. Steere repeats and incorporates by reference its answers to Paragraphs 1-182 above.

184. Denied.

185. Denied.

186. Denied.

COUNT XX
Declaratory Judgment Regarding Contribution
All Defendants

187. Steere repeats and incorporates by reference its answers to Paragraphs 1-186 above.

188. Denied.

189. Denied.

190. Denied.

First Affirmative Defense

Plaintiff has failed to state a claim upon which relief can be granted.

Second Affirmative Defense

All claims are barred by the statute of repose and/or the statute of limitations.

Third Affirmative Defense

Plaintiff's alleged damages were caused by the acts and/or omissions of third-parties over whom Steere exercised no control and for whose conduct Steere is not responsible.

Fourth Affirmative Defense

Plaintiff's claims are barred by the doctrines of laches, waiver, and estoppel.

Fifth Affirmative Defense

Plaintiff's claims are barred or should be reduced because Plaintiff failed to mitigate its damages.

Sixth Affirmative Defense

Plaintiff's claims are barred because no act or omission by Steere has caused Plaintiff's damages.

Seventh Affirmative Defense

Any conduct by Steere was not a proximate cause of the damages claimed.

Eighth Affirmative Defense

Steere breached no duty owed to Plaintiff.

Ninth Affirmative Defense

Plaintiff's claims are barred by the Economic Loss Doctrine.

Tenth Affirmative Defense

Steere breached no obligations which the Plaintiff can claim it was owed by Steere.

Eleventh Affirmative Defense

Steere at all times relevant hereto acted in accordance with the applicable standard of professional care under the circumstances.

Twelfth Affirmative Defense

The claims are barred, or recovery must be reduced, due to contributory negligence.

Thirteenth Affirmative Defense

The claims are barred under R.I. Gen. Laws § 6-34-1 due to the acts and/or omissions of third-parties over whom Steere exercised no control and for whose conduct Steere is not responsible.

Fourteenth Affirmative Defense

The claims are barred due to the Plaintiff's failure to satisfy a condition precedent to bringing its claims, including but not limited to, the failure to exhaust all administrative remedies.

Fifteenth Affirmative Defense

Steere incorporates by reference, as if fully set forth herein, all defenses, both affirmative and otherwise, asserted by all other answering defendants.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Defendant Steere Engineering, Inc. respectfully requests this Court:

- (a) Enter judgment in its favor and against Plaintiff as to all counts;
- (b) Award Defendant Steere its reasonable attorneys' fees and costs; and
- (c) Render any such additional relief as may be just and proper provided by law under the circumstances.

JURY DEMAND

Steere hereby demands a trial by jury on all issues so triable.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Warren D. Hutchison
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Dated: October 31, 2024

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, Warren D. Hutchison, hereby certify that on this day, October 31, 2024, a true copy of the foregoing has been filed and served on all parties of record through the Rhode Island electronic filing system. The document electronically filed and/or served is available for viewing and/or download from the Rhode Island Judiciary's Electronic Filing System.

FOR THE STATE OF RHODE ISLAND:

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