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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 13, 2022

TRENTON – The New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NJDOL) issued stop-work orders to contractor HESP Solar L.L.C. of Montvale and subcontractor Patriot Iron Works of Gaithersburg, Maryland, who were working on a project at Belleville High School.

Investigators from NJDOL's Division of Wage and Hour and Contract Compliance delivered the stop-work notices on Oct. 7 to the two contractors working at 100 Passaic Ave. A site inspection led to Patriot Iron Works being cited for failure to register and failure to carry required workers compensation insurance, while HESP Solar was cited for hiring an unregistered subcontractor.

"There's been a surge of violations occurring at construction jobs at our schools," said Joseph Petrecca, Assistant Commissioner of the Division of Wage and Hour and Contract Compliance. "It is of utmost importance that schools and municipalities set the example by ensuring only those that have been vetted through the NJDOL's public works contractor registration process are hired to work on taxpayer-funded projects."

NJDOL maintains a [record of registered public works contractors](#) that should be consulted by every government agency or entity before hiring for a public works job. Doing so can help avoid unnecessary project delays and extra costs to businesses, schools, government entities and taxpayers. The current list contains more than 6,000 businesses, and is searchable by name, address, registration date, and certificate number.

In June, NJDOL, with its partners at the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs' Division of Local Government Services (DLGS) and the New Jersey Department of Education (DOE), [sent a letter](#) reminding local governments and boards of education of their responsibilities under the New Jersey Prevailing Wage Act, which requires the payment of minimum rates of pay to laborers, craftsmen, and apprentices employed on public works projects. Construction contractors performing public work must also participate in a [USDOL Registered Apprenticeship program](#), ensuring that a portion of taxpayer dollars are investing in New Jersey's future workforce.

In May 2019, Governor Murphy [signed into law](#) legislation giving NJDOL the power to immediately halt work at any public or private work site – both construction and non-construction sites – when an initial investigation finds evidence that the employer has violated state wage, benefit, or tax laws. An employer may appeal a stop-work order, in which case the NJDOL has seven days to schedule a hearing. The NJDOL continues to monitor locations where stop-work orders have been issued, and can assess civil penalties of up to \$5,000 per day against an employer conducting business in violation of the order. The stop-work order may be lifted if and when any remaining back wages and penalties have been paid and all related issues have been resolved.

For more information on New Jersey's wage and hour laws, please visit [myworkrights.nj.gov](#).

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