To: Maryland Senate Finance Committee
From: ExeGi Pharma
Re: SB 0511
Date: February 21, 2024

My name is Yamil Hernández, and I am the Co-Founder/Chief Business Officer of ExeGi Pharma. I also serve as a Councilmember in the City of Gaithersburg and Chair the I.T. & Life Sciences Committee for the Montgomery County Workforce Development Board. I am submitting this written testimony in support of SB 0511 – Apprenticeship Standards, Ratio of Apprentices to Journeypersons.

This bill proposes to adjust the current ratio of apprentices to journeypersons from 1:1 to 3:1 in non-traditional, non-construction trade occupations. The existing 1:1 ratio constrains employers in specific sectors, including I.T. and Life Sciences/Biotechnology, limiting our capacity to expand training and sustainable job opportunities for residents. By enhancing this ratio, emerging and expanding businesses like ExeGi can more effectively fulfill our current and future hiring needs, while also generating new job opportunities—thereby opening doors for job seekers locally and statewide. In rapidly evolving industries such as I.T. and Life Sciences, this change is urgently needed.

The belief that careers within the I.T. and Life Sciences sectors—and many others addressed by this bill—necessarily require a college degree is a widespread myth. On the contrary, many roles do not. My industry partners and I would welcome the opportunity to enlarge the pool of competitive, qualified job candidates by embracing additional apprentices for certain positions. This bill aims to support individuals without a college degree who are in search of sustainable employment offering job security, competitive wages, and more.

Creating jobs and opportunities is essential for a healthy, thriving economy.

As a business owner, I strongly advocate for this bill to be favorably reported out of Committee. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully Submitted,

Yamil Hernández