

Chairman Dereck Davis  
Vice-Chair Kathleen Dumais  
Members  
Economic Matters Committee  
231 House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

January 21, 2021

**RE: HB 174 – Public Utilities – Investor-Owned Utilities – Prevailing Wage**  
**Position: Support**

Chairman Davis and Members of the House Economic Matters Committee:

My Name is Jami Kirila. I am the owner of Kirila Earthworks, a WBE and MBE small business contractor based in Prince Georges County. We specialize in stormwater, utilities, and site development services for commercial, industrial, environmental, and residential projects throughout Maryland.

Kirila Earthworks is in support House Bill 174, which would apply Maryland's Prevailing Wage underground utility work done by investor-owned utilities.

Most state public infrastructure work already pays prevailing wage. We believe prevailing wage helps companies like Kirila Earthworks partner with organizations like LiUNA to build a strong and local construction workforce -- one that is paid decent wages, with healthcare and pension benefits.

We are proud to be a small company that helps create middle-class jobs for construction workers in Maryland. Prevailing wage helps companies like ours compete on a level playing field against companies that do the same work but may not take care of their employees the way we do.

Currently, 50% of our workforce are Prince Georges County residents. As a general contractor, we are heavily involved in Prince Georges County's Clean Water Partnership. Our firm was in the first cohort of a mentor/protégé program included in the CWP. We started with just two employees and today employ 12 construction workers in the program. We have also taken advantage of the built-in local hiring incentives by focusing on hiring local county residents. And with their help, we have performed \$8 million worth of stormwater infrastructure work throughout the county as part of the CWP.

When Maryland invests its capital dollars in ways that supports construction workers, it allows my company to continue to invest in apprenticeship and training for workers. As a result, our construction workers come to the job site experienced and well skilled. This helps my company perform at a high level, with great efficiency, which enables our company to do good work, on time, and on budget.

My company is a great example of how prevailing wage builds value into public works capital investment. Prevailing wage promotes the success of local contractors, employment growth for local construction workers, and helps build Maryland's economy. Because it is a natural extension of public works, we believe that same value will be built into the work done by Maryland's public utilities through this bill.

We urge your favorable support of House Bill 174. Thank you.