

Chair Delores Kelley
Vice-Chair Brian Feldman
Members
Senate Finance Committee
3 East Miller Ofc Bldg
Annapolis, MD 21401

January 28, 2021

RE: SB 95 – Public Utilities – Investor-Owned Utilities – Prevailing Wage
Position: Support

Chairwoman Kelley and Members of the Senate Finance 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 Senate Bill 95.

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 and invests in apprenticeship training for construction workers in Maryland. Prevailing wage helps small companies like ours compete on a level playing field against larger companies because it creates a standard floor for wages, in our case workers specializing in utility work.

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.

The value of prevailing wage is obvious. It promotes the success of local companies like ours, 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 Senate Bill 95. Thank you.