

KATIE FRY HESTER
Legislative District 9
Carroll and Howard Counties

Education, Health, and
Environmental Affairs Committee

Chair, Joint Committee on
Cybersecurity, Information Technology
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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony in Support of SB903 - Traditional Trade Apprenticeship Fund

March 17th, 2021

Chairwoman Kelley, Vice Chair Feldman, and Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

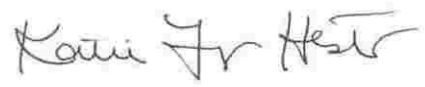
Thank you for your consideration of Senate Bill 903. Each and every one of our districts has its own important history - and a unique historic built environment worth preserving. From Footer Dye Works in Cumberland and Philips Packing Plant in Cambridge, to National Park Seminary in Silver Spring and Fort Ritchie in Washington County, the preservation and rehabilitation of our historic properties has breathed new life in communities and given new opportunities to a diverse set of individuals who use those spaces. But historic revitalization is a difficult undertaking, and requires unique skills on the part of workers to be done correctly and efficiently.

With unemployment at historic levels and a large number of individuals displaced by the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a need for workforce development programs in a variety of fields. Simultaneously, there is an opportunity to train people in fields like historic revitalization, where the jobs, although specialized, pay well and support a good quality of life. This bill seeks to build on a successful model, already working in Maryland, to provide such opportunities for our constituents interested in a career in a traditional trade.

Senate Bill 903 would create a Traditional Trade Apprenticeship Fund within the Department of Labor. This special non-lapsing fund would be used to distribute grants of up to \$50,000, to support apprenticeships where participants perform traditional tradework on historic preservation projects in the State. These parameters are modeled after the Traditional Trade Apprenticeship Program (TTAP), developed by Preservation Maryland in partnership with the National Park Service under the umbrella of "The Campaign for Historic Trades." Through this program, The Campaign works to engage at-risk youth, young adults, and recent veterans in paid pre-apprenticeship positions at National Park units across the country. While COVID-19 has made placement challenging this year, the program is designed to place individuals trained through this program in historic preservation roles with the National Park Service.

With the Federal Great American Outdoors Act supporting more than \$3 billion worth of historic rehabilitation projects across the nation, we can expect to see a rise in investment in historic preservation projects. By supporting apprenticeships in this field, we can use this influx of investment to train a new generation of traditional trades workers who will be prepared to maintain our historic properties for years to come. In doing so, we can simultaneously complete important work to preserve our existing portfolio of historic properties, and bring good paying jobs to our constituents. This is a clear benefit to our constituents, our communities, and the history of the State of Maryland. For these reasons, I **respectfully request a favorable report for Senate Bill 903.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katie Fry Hester". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "K" and "H".

Senator Katie Fry Hester
Howard and Carroll County