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**Letter of Support**

**SB 297 - State Board for Professional Engineers - Engineer Members - Qualifications**

This bill seeks to enhance the ability of the Board of Professional Engineers (“the Board”) to attract qualified and diverse industry professionals to serve on the Board. It does this by reducing the number of years of professional practice, from 12 to 5 years, that is required to be eligible for appointment to the Board.

The Board of Professional Engineers qualifies and licenses individuals seeking licensure and issues permits to business entities through which engineering is practiced. The Board regulates the practice of engineering under the provisions of the Business Occupations and Professions Article, Annotated Code of Maryland, Title 14, and the Code of Maryland Regulations, Title 9, Subtitle 23.

Attracting and retaining committed industry professionals is a challenge for all of the occupational and professional licensing boards managed by the Department. This change would remove a barrier to young professionals in the engineering field, expand the pool of eligible candidates, and encourage further diversity of the Board.

For the above reasons, the Department respectfully requests a **favorable report** by the Committee on SB 297.