



March 23, 2024

Dear Members of the Committee on Health and Government Operations,

My name is Carla Nelson Chambers, Managing Principal of The Nelson Ideation Group, LLC. TNIG provides management consulting services to public and private sector clients, specializing in appraisal and contract compliance monitoring services of diverse certified firms to meet our clients' needs. Our extensive experience in corporate, government and economic development projects uniquely qualifies us to cultivate critical relationships and create strategic alliances with diverse certified firms, along with developing best practices when needed for those we commit to serve.

My past experience as the Director of Minority & Women-owned Business and Development Director of Minority & Women-owned Business Development for the City of Baltimore from 2007 through 2011, I was responsible for implementing the Mayor's agenda of the Minority and Women-owned Business Enterprise (MWBE) program for the City of Baltimore.

My role required me to focus on advocating, educating, informing, and promoting the interests of Minority and Women owned businesses in the City of Baltimore and the greater Baltimore region. My office was responsible to review, interpreting, evaluating, and implementing inter-departmental policies, practices, and procedures that effectively serve the minority business community in City contracts. Additionally, my office monitored the efficacy and compliance with City, State, and Federal laws and regulations as they related to city contracts via CitiStat where all agencies had to report their MWBE participation on a monthly basis, with explanations for those contracts or solicitations that had no MWBE goals or participation.

I am delighted to learn the State of Maryland is taking this important step forward in providing the public sector, legislators, private businesses and minority, women and veteran-owned advocacy groups on data that will give all stakeholders an opportunity to see just where we are as a State in achieving the aspirational goal of 29% minority procurements of State contracting opportunities.

Providing accurate and on-time data on procurement contracts with minority-owned enterprises, women-owned businesses, and veteran owned businesses is another step in the effort to let all Marylanders know where the State stands towards meeting the MWBE goals set back in 2001.

The transparency objective will only be effective if the Board of Public Works creates a dashboard that presents information in such a way that it is accessible, easily found, and easy to operate and accurate. The State will need to invest in staff that understand the Dashboard's importance, relevance to meeting the MBE goals, the need to maintain its accuracy and keep the information up to date. Finally, the dashboard should be compatible with the state's Open Budget system to allow for future, potential integration of vendor payments data.

I fully support House Bill 877, for the Board of Public Works – Transparency Dashboard.

Thank you kindly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carla Nelson Chambers".

Carla Nelson Chambers, Managing Principal
The Nelson Ideation Group, LLC