



INDUSTRIAL COATINGS CONTRACTOR

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February 21, 2024

House of Delegates Health and Government Operations Committee

Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk Chair

Bonnie Cullison Vice Chair

Room 241 House Office Building

Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Subject: Support HB 1276- Public Works Contracts – Apprenticeship Requirements (Maryland Workforce Apprenticeship Utilization Act)

Dear Honorable Members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee:

I trust this letter finds you in good health and high spirits. As the licensed contractor for Maryland, I am reaching out to express my wholehearted support for the Maryland Workforce Apprenticeship Utilization Act HB 1276. As a dedicated resident of Maryland, I firmly believe that investing in the development of our workforce is indispensable for the state's prosperity and sustained growth. As a state, our investments wield the power to shape a more just and inclusive labor market, therefore require that registered apprenticeship programs be utilized on public works projects.

Highlighting the documented average annual cost of workforce development in Maryland further underscores the importance of ensuring a knowledgeable and prepared workforce. According to the Maryland Center for Economic Policy (MCEP), policymakers allocated \$572 million to workforce development programs in 2020. By nurturing the growth of workers in the dynamic construction and safety industry, Registered Apprenticeship programs significantly contribute to individuals' well-being by offering dignified wages and benefits that ensure financial security. The repercussions of neglecting this preparation extend to threats to personal safety, an increase in total ownership cost, and diminished readiness and system performance.

The dedication shown by apprentices, investing approximately 144 hours or 4 weeks in the classroom annually, paired with on-the-job training spanning 1,500 – 2,000 hours over 2 to 4 years, deserves commendation. This structured learning environment, fostered at state registered training centers across the

State of Maryland, facilitates the transfer of knowledge from seasoned craftsmen and craftswomen to the next generation of workers.

I wish to emphasize the noteworthy commitment of Maryland Registered Apprenticeship Programs, collectively investing over \$10 million private dollars annually to train workers in the building and construction trades. This substantial investment underscores their dedication to upholding the highest standards of education within the construction industry.

The effective and economical construction of public works projects hinges on the availability of a well-trained workforce. It is crucial to recognize that funds spent on public projects without incorporating apprenticeship utilization may not be allocated optimally. The construction industry in Maryland is in need of a robust supply of trained workers to meet the demands outlined in state projects and the federal infrastructure legislation.

The Registered Apprenticeship Programs, standing as the premier apprenticeship and training initiative for the building and construction industries, can be pivotal in ensuring that public works projects serve as catalysts for training the next generation of construction workers. This strategic approach guarantees quality outcomes, fostering long-lasting benefits and, ultimately, resulting in cost savings for the State of Maryland.

In conclusion, I earnestly urge you to vote favorably for HB 1276 - The Maryland Workforce Apprenticeship Utilization Act. This legislation not only aligns with the goals of workforce development but also ensures the prosperity and resilience of our state in the face of future challenges.

Thank you for your unwavering attention to this matter, and I appreciate your continued efforts to enhance the well-being of Maryland's workforce.

Sincerely,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "M. Forakis", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Michael Forakis
President