



February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Delegate Peña-Melnyk, Chair  
Health and Government Operations Committee  
241 House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**RE: HB 1276 – UNFAVORABLE – Public Works Contracts – Apprenticeship Requirements  
(Maryland Workforce Apprenticeship Utilization Act)**

Dear Chair Peña-Melnyk and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Transportation Builders and Materials Association (“MTBMA”) has been and continues to serve as the voice for Maryland’s construction transportation industry since 1932. Our association is comprised of 200 members. MTBMA encourages, develops, and protects the prestige of the transportation construction and materials industry in Maryland by establishing and maintaining respected relationships with federal, state, and local public officials. We proactively work with regulatory agencies and governing bodies to represent the interests of the transportation industry and advocate for adequate state and federal funding for Maryland’s multimodal transportation system.

House Bill 1276 would alter the apprenticeship requirements related to public works contracts requiring contractors and subcontractors to employ a specified percentage of apprentices and journeypersons. Starting January 1, 2025, that percentage would be 25%, and each year thereafter, the Secretary will set the applicable percentage.

MTBMA respectfully opposes HB 1276 because it will negatively impact the current apprenticeship program. We feel this bill is disguised as a pro-labor bill. While we have member organizations that are both union and non-union, we cannot support legislation that gives favor to one over the other. We support fair and equitable competition amongst contractors. This bill would require contractors to sign agreements, essentially mandating them to be unionized.

In a state like Maryland, where over 90% of contractors are open shop, passing a law that gives preference to union labor excludes the majority of Maryland contractors from competing and working on jobs in the State. Moreover, eliminating most of the competition will always lead to increased costs. The Minority Contractors Association has confirmed that an overwhelming majority of W/MBE contractors are open shop (98%) – meaning this piece of legislation will disproportionately negatively impact W/MBE companies.

We appreciate you taking the time to consider our request for an **UNFAVORABLE** report on HB 1276.

Thank you,

Michael Sakata  
President and CEO  
Maryland Transportation Builders and Materials Association