



March 23, 2024

Dear Members of the Committee on Budget and Taxation,

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.

As a minority women owned DBE, MBW, WBE, and SBR certified firm with the State of Maryland, I have experienced firsthand the pros and cons of the Small Business Reserve (SBR) program. I am delighted to learn the State is seriously considering making amendments to the program as it relates to the structure of its procurement procedures to achieve a significant percentage increase in the total dollars spent directly with Small, Minority and Women-owned businesses (S/MWBE).

I ask for your consideration to emphasize the importance of face-to face engagement and outreach session to the S/MWBE community consistently, making them aware of the program and contract opportunities available to them. E Maryland Marketplace is okay but often the receipt of their emails regarding State solicitations are not timely to respond accordingly. As small business owners, we are faced with the day-to-day operations of our business so learning about procurement opportunities where we can propose as a prime contractor is vital to the growth of our business and enhances our reason for being certified with the State.

I also think adding the proposed amendments with assist in the State in achieving the aspirational goal of 29% minority procurements of State contracting opportunities.

I fully support House Bill 962, Small and Minority Business Reserve Program.

Thank you kindly,

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