



February 20, 2024

Delegate Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk, Chairwoman
House, Health, and Government Operations
Room 241, House Office Building
Annapolis, Md. 21401

Ref: House Bill 1184-State Procurement, Preferences, Historically Underutilized Business Zones
Businesses

Dear Chairwoman Pena-Melnyk,

It has come to my attention that the House & Government Operations Committee will hear public comments on House Bill 1184, and its features to expand Maryland's procurement to businesses certified by Maryland US HUBZone certified businesses. Please understand that it is my distinct pleasure to provide testimony representing the members and e-subscribers of Md. Washington Minority Companies Association (MWMCA), located in Baltimore City, Maryland. Since 2002, MWMCA has operated as a construction trade, design, and material commodity trade association with hundreds of members and thousands of virtual e-subscribers. Our weekly e-newsletter to small, minority and women owned businesses is their guiding light and voice to that community. Our industry renowned website www.mwmca.org is most sought after by major corporations and small businesses alike looking to connect with one another for mutual benefits. In essence we support and endorse total social economic engineering inclusion and believe Maryland is ready for more.

Now comes our nation's enabling, Small Business Administration, US Historically Underutilized Business Zones (US HUBZone) procurement enhancement act for consideration to be adopted by Maryland legislators in this session. One might feel that the state is already inundated with other disadvantaged business programs, like our MBE/WBE, Veterans, and Small Business Reserve. However, as socially economic conscience they are, their penetration or participation is all consuming and extremely wide, whereas HUBZone certified business program targets or addresses only those businesses that are in select distressed and impoverished communities. The US HUBZone Certification program is race, gender, and ethnic neutral. Furthermore, unlike the other state disadvantaged business programs, US HUBZone certified firms must employ 35% of their employees from the geographical area in which they are located in. A game changer for employment and new business development in some of Maryland's most challenged communities.

Let it be known, that in August 2023, Maryland's Public Service Commission (PSC) voted to adopt and accept Maryland's 400 plus US HUBZone Certified businesses as part of their regulated disadvantage business program. Prior to this adoption, the PSC was already capturing

spend from businesses certified by MDOT, Baltimore City, LGTBQ, Federal DBE and various Women Groups. That means businesses like BGE, PEPCO, Washington Gas, Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative, Verizon, Comcast, UBER and MARC Train, to name a few of the 37 regulated companies will be tracking US HUBZone-Maryland certified companies now.

Our progressive state has been and remains a national leader in social economic engineering inclusion and the passage of this legislation would send a strong message to firms in and around the state of Maryland that we take pride in rebuilding and stabilizing our weakest communities through employing their residents. Therefore, MWMCA fully supports the passage of House Bill 1184 as a jobs act generator to grow employment opportunities for those brave and committed firms residing and operating in our overlooked communities. We pray that the Health and Government Operations Committee will vote in favor of passage of this bill and move it to the General Assembly for full vote. Then and only then will total economic inclusion be achieved by our glorious "Free State".

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Wayne R. Frazier, Sr.', written over a horizontal line.

Wayne R. Frazier, Sr.
President