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February 19, 2025

Economic Matters Committee

C.T Wilson, Chair

Brian M Crosby, Vice Chair

230 Taylor House Office Building

Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Subject: Support HB 1017- Public Works Contracts – Apprenticeship Requirements (Maryland Workforce Apprenticeship Utilization Act of 2025)

Dear Honorable Members of the House Economic Matters Committee:

I hope this letter finds you well. As a licensed industrial painting contractor in Maryland, I am writing to express my strong support for the Maryland Workforce Apprenticeship Utilization Act of 2025 (HB 1017). As a business owner and resident, I am deeply committed to fostering a skilled workforce that ensures the continued growth and success of Maryland's economy.

The industrial painting industry, like many others, faces challenges in workforce development, but HB 1017 offers a valuable opportunity to enhance the quality of our workforce and promote inclusivity. By requiring registered apprenticeship programs on public works projects, this legislation will help strengthen the skillset of the workforce while ensuring a more inclusive labor market.

Registered Apprenticeship programs are vital not only for developing skilled workers but also for ensuring safety on the job. In the industrial painting sector, where workers frequently handle hazardous materials, work at heights, and use heavy equipment, safety training is crucial. Apprenticeships ensure that workers are trained to follow proper safety protocols, minimizing accidents and creating a safer work environment. Workers who have gone through these programs are more reliable, prepared to mitigate risks, and better able to protect both themselves and their coworkers.

In 2020, Maryland allocated \$572 million to workforce development programs, demonstrating the state's commitment to developing a qualified and effective workforce. Supporting Registered Apprenticeship programs ensures that workers are well-trained, which directly benefits safety, productivity, and the long-term success of public works projects.

Apprenticeships also offer a direct pathway for individuals to earn while they learn, gaining hands-on experience that is crucial in fields like industrial painting. This approach not only reduces the financial burden of education but ensures that workers are job-ready and skilled, which ultimately enhances project quality and efficiency.

Furthermore, these programs play a key role in promoting workforce diversity by providing opportunities for women and minorities, helping to break down barriers and create an inclusive, well-rounded workforce. The success of Maryland's construction industry depends on having access to a diverse pool of talented, well-trained workers.

Registered Apprenticeship programs invest over \$10 million annually in training workers in the building and construction trades, further reinforcing their commitment to workforce development. This investment is essential to ensuring that Maryland has the skilled labor needed for successful, cost-effective public works projects.

I urge you to support HB 1017, as it will help ensure the continued success of public works projects and create valuable training opportunities for the next generation of workers. By investing in apprenticeship utilization, we are building a safer, more skilled workforce that will support Maryland's future growth.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Pete Forakis", with a stylized, flowing script.

Pete Forakis