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February 3, 2025

Senate Finance Committee
House Economic Matters Committee
90 State Circle, Room 23I Annapolis, MD
21401

Re: Maryland Apprenticeship And Prevailing Wage Transparency Act (SB3 / HB850)

Dear Chairs Wilson and Beidle, and Members of the House Economic Matters and Senate Finance Committees:

For over thirty years, I have built and sustained my business, RSC Electrical & Mechanical Contractors, Inc., as a proud union-certified MBE contractor. Running a small business in the construction industry has always been a challenge, but in recent years, those challenges have become increasingly insurmountable. I employ a full union shop. I pay my workers good wages, sometimes struggling to do so, because I believe in creating strong, middle-class careers. But competing in this industry is never easy, and the reality is that it's getting harder by the day.

Every time I bid on a project, I'm up against contractors who cut corners, not just on materials but on people. There are those who misclassify workers to skirt payroll taxes and avoid providing benefits. Others outright pay their workforce off the books, undercutting responsible businesses like mine that follow the law. Some even rely on labor traffickers who exploit vulnerable workers with little recourse. Meanwhile, I do everything by the book—because that's how I was taught, and that's how my workers deserve to be treated. But at the end of the day, these dishonest practices create an impossible and unfair playing field for small, legitimate businesses like mine.

I support SB3 / HB850 because it provides a measure of transparency that is desperately needed. By tracking payroll and certified apprentices, we can ensure that those who are awarded public contracts are playing by the rules. Other states have already taken similar steps—New York implemented a prevailing wage database that led to a substantial reduction in wage theft and worker misclassification. Nevada has seen a marked increase in apprenticeship completion rates because of stronger accountability measures. Maryland should not lag behind when solutions already exist and have proven effective.

If this legislation is not enacted, businesses like mine will continue to struggle under the weight of an industry rigged in favor of those who ignore the rules. We need accessible, enforceable tools to ensure that every contractor is competing fairly and that workers receive the wages they are legally owed. This bill is not just about compliance; it is about protecting businesses that are trying to do things the right way and ensuring that workers have access to good jobs that allow them to support their families. I urge the committee to pass this legislation so that responsible businesses like mine have a fighting chance.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Jonathan Bolden
Owner, RSC Electrical & Mechanical Contractors, Inc.