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Government, Elections and Labor

To: Delegate Melissa Wells, Chair; Delegate Ken Kerr, Vice Chair; and Members of the Committee
From: Jason Ascher, Political Director – Mid-Atlantic Pipe Trades Association

SUPPORT HB 864 - Public Works Contracts - Apprenticeship Requirements (Maryland Workforce Apprenticeship Utilization Act)

On behalf of the Mid-Atlantic Pipe Trades Association and our four United Association of Plumbers and Steamfitters Locals, which represent over 10,000 Plumbers, Steamfitters, Welders, HVAC Techs, and Sprinkler Fitters across Maryland. On their behalf, I ask you to **SUPPORT HB 864**.

In the construction industry, an apprenticeship is the best way to train a new worker and a great way to change a person's life. Apprentices get trained in a skilled craft with both classroom and on-the-job training. In fact, the on-the-job training is what makes or breaks a good apprenticeship program. An apprentice works 1-on-1 with a skilled journeyman in their craft each workday. After work, an apprentice will attend class to learn the fundamentals and theory behind their work on the jobsite. This gives the apprentice a skill that no one can take away. Jobs may come and go, but what you learn in a true registered apprenticeship program lasts a lifetime.

The more registered apprentices working in Maryland, the more people are given an opportunity for a better life. As an apprentice in a registered union apprenticeship program, you get high-quality training free of charge and a career in a skilled trade, with the opportunity to grow in your craft and the ability to take care of yourself and your family with not just good wages, but benefits like health coverage and a pension. If you want, you can even start your own business and eventually help give new apprentices the same opportunity you had.

In a time when more workers are increasingly needed in the plumbing, pipefitting, and HVAC industry, apprenticeship requirements are a great way to increase the number of skilled workers. By requiring that all public construction projects use at least 20% of the workforce as registered apprentices, we ensure that, when tax dollars are in use, we give people this great opportunity to join a skilled trade by increasing the number of registered apprentices in Maryland. Requiring registered apprentices to be on every public works job ensures that, along with knowing you are getting a well-trained worker, you know the worker is local because a Maryland registered apprenticeship program will have Maryland residents in the program.

HB 864 also provides for a reasonable standard for seeking a waiver from this requirement, ensuring that no local business are excluded from public construction contracts.

For the above reasons, we ask that you give **HB 864**.

Sincerely

Jason Ascher

Plumbers and Gasfitters Local 5 – Lanham, MD
Plumbers and Steamfitters Local 10 – Richmond, VA/Roanoke, VA
Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 110 – Norfolk, VA
Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 74 – Newark, DE

Plumbers and Steamfitters Local 486 – Baltimore, MD
Steamfitters Local 602 – Capitol Heights, MD
Road Sprinkler Fitters Local 669 – Columbia, MD