



Delegate Melissa Wells, Chair
142 Lowe House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

February 19, 2026

RE: HB 864 – UNFAVORABLE – Public Works Contracts – Apprenticeship Requirements (Maryland Workforce Apprenticeship Utilization Act)

Dear Chair Wells and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Asphalt Association (MAA) represents approximately 110+ members, including 20 material producers, contractors, engineering firms, and associate members, supporting a 7,000-person workforce. MAA actively collaborates with regulatory agencies to advocate for the asphalt industry, ensuring fair regulations at both the state and federal levels. Additionally, we support adequate funding for Maryland's multimodal transportation system.

House Bill 864 would set apprenticeship mandates for contractors and subcontractors working on covered public construction projects to 20 percent, and then allow the Secretary of Labor discretion to set a different percentage each subsequent year.

HB 864 turns apprenticeship goals into rigid mandates that risk shrinking bidder pools, raising costs, and sidelining qualified contractors. The bill ties compliance almost exclusively to registered apprenticeship ratios, which in Maryland are largely union-sponsored. Rigid ratios do not reflect real-world labor availability by trade, region, or project phase and they limit hiring flexibility which can increase wage pressure. This puts small, specialty, minority, and emerging contractors most at risk of being excluded.

Based on our concerns, we respectfully request an unfavorable report on HB 864.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Tim Smith'.

Tim E. Smith. P.E.
President
Maryland Asphalt Association