



Delegate Melissa Wells, Chair  
House Government, Labor, and Elections Committee  
143 Lowe House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

February 5, 2026

**RE: HB 203 – UNFAVORABLE – Labor and Employment – Training Repayment Agreements – Prohibition**

Dear Chair Wells and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Transportation Builders and Materials Association (“MTBMA”) has been and continues to serve as the voice for Maryland’s construction transportation industry since 1932. Our association is comprised of 250 members. MTBMA encourages, develops, and protects the prestige of the transportation construction and materials industry in Maryland by establishing and maintaining respected relationships with federal, state, and local public officials. We proactively work with regulatory agencies and governing bodies to represent the interests of the transportation industry and advocate for adequate state and federal funding for Maryland’s multimodal transportation system.

HB 203 would prohibit employers from requiring employees or prospective employees to enter into training repayment agreements if they leave employment or decide not to take the job. MTBMA cannot support this legislation because it applies a sweeping mandate that ignores whether the training is high-cost, industry-portable, or safety-critical, and it imposes severe penalties for violations, including civil fines, private lawsuits, and damages. Notably, the bill exempts training repayment agreements contained within collective bargaining agreements, creating an uneven regulatory landscape that disproportionately penalizes open-shop contractors. By failing to distinguish between predatory "stay-or-pay" contracts and the reasonable, time-limited agreements commonly used in construction and engineering to support specialized certifications, this bill removes the necessary legal framework for private sector training investments.

This bill shifts the entire financial risk of workforce development onto the employer, creating a massive disincentive for companies to invest in upskilling and advanced safety training. In the transportation and materials industry, the high cost of equipment certifications and specialized onboarding is an investment in the worker’s career; without the protection of reasonable repayment agreements, employers—particularly small businesses—will likely be forced to scale back these critical professional development opportunities. Because HB 203 offers no alternative funding model for these necessary programs, it threatens the competitiveness of the industry and conflicts with our mission to support a highly skilled transportation workforce. We respectfully urge an unfavorable report on HB 203.

Thank you,

Michael Sakata  
President and CEO  
Maryland Transportation Builders and Materials Association