



March 10, 2020

The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky, Chairman
Senate Education, Health & Environmental Affairs Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: SB 868 – Apprenticeship Maryland 2030 – Support with Amendments

Dear Chairman Pinsky:

SB 868 proposes a number of ideas intended to nurture and grow registered apprenticeships in the State. While the Marine Trades Association of Maryland recognizes the value of registered apprenticeships, we would oppose the bill as written. As written, the bill calls for the repurposing of the highly successful EARN Maryland Program money. The EARN funding has played a critical role in building a sustainable workforce for the recreational boating industry through our Strategic Industry Partnership for the Marine Trades.

The Marine Trades Association of Maryland (MTAM) was formed in 1972 with a goal of supporting the recreational boating industry through advocacy, education and promotion. The recreational boating industry in Maryland is a \$3.5 billion industry and represents 18,000 jobs. Workforce development is one of the biggest challenges the marine trades face as an industry. The industry has a graying labor pool and we compete for talent with other business sectors that face the same trends but are bigger and better financed. With the help of the EARN Grant money, the Marine Trades Industry Partnership (MTIP) was formed in 2014 with the goal of recruiting and training new workers for the recreational boating industry. What was unique about EARN vs. other workforce development funding was that it is employer driven. We are not a one-size-fits-all industry, job descriptions vary vastly depending on the location and type of boat. EARN was a perfect fit for growing the recreational boating industry in Maryland.

The Marine Trades Industry Partnership puts young people at the start of their career into 6-week on-the-job training practicums. The trainee is placed with our partners to explore careers in our industry. During that timeframe, our workforce development coordinator fosters the relationship and works to turn the experience into a full-time job offer. We have placed over 70 new workers into our industry with a retention rate of 58%. Our incumbent worker training, designed to move people up in position and salary, has trained 140 in operator training and 58 in certificate courses. EARN is successful because it allows business to drive program development. Our employer and industry partners have designed our current program,

determining it the most effective and efficient way to meet their training needs. The MTIP is working towards a Marine Mechanic Apprenticeship but not at the expense of our current OJT practicums financed by EARN. Looking at other states with Marine Mechanic Apprenticeships (Rhode Island, Florida to name a few), they are formed, however they are never as successful as the programs designed by the employer to fit the actual need of the industry.

EARN funding has made a difference to our industry. The EARN program is nationally recognized as a workforce initiative that keeps the program design with the employer and industry partners instead of prescribing a single delivery model. EARN has helped nearly 5,000 individuals obtain employment and has led to increased skills for 7,500 incumbent workers throughout the state.

In closing, the Marine Trades Association of Maryland would support SB868 with the amendments that keep the current level of EARN funding intact and ask that you consider the same.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan Zellers", written in a cursive style.

Susan Zellers
Executive Director, MTAM

cc: Members, Senate Education, Health & Environmental Affairs Committee