August 23, 2019

Adele Gagliardi, Administrator
Office of Policy Development and Research
U.S. Department of Labor,
200 Constitution Avenue NW
Room N-5641,
Washington, DC 20210

RE: U.S. DOL Industry Recognized Apprenticeship Programs Implementation Proposed Rule - RIN 1205-AB85

Administrator Gagliardi:

As Minnesota’s Legislative Leaders, we write to affirm the value of Registered Apprenticeship programs in training the safest, most highly skilled construction workforce for the State of Minnesota, and to express our support for the permanent exemption for the construction industry in the proposed rule: Apprenticeship Programs, Labor Standards for Registration, Amendment of Regulations (1205-AB85).

There are currently over 10,000 Registered Apprentices in Minnesota in more than 50 privately funded construction Registered Apprenticeship Programs training to be our State’s future plumbers, electricians, iron workers, crane operators, laborers, carpenters and other highly skilled trades workers. Registered Apprenticeships have been the pathway for more women and minorities to enter the construction trades and Minnesota contractors, business owners, and communities rely on Registered Apprenticeship programs to train our future construction workers to grow our State’s economy and ensure our safety.

Unfortunately, if expanded to include the construction industry, the proposed rules would undermine the integrity and drive down the training and labor standards in construction Registered Apprenticeship programs, setting off a race to the bottom in Minnesota’s construction industry. Minnesota is not willing to jeopardize the quality of its construction and the safety and security of its construction workforce.
The public is also at risk. Having the safest roads, bridges, schools and utilities requires the best trained workers with the highest level of skill. Anything less, especially an untested training program with lowered standards, will put public safety at risk.

Therefore, we respectfully request that the U.S. Department of Labor ensure that the construction industry be permanently excluded from these proposed rules and that Registered Apprenticeship be preserved as the system for training our State’s current and future construction workforce.

Sincerely,

Majority Leader Paul Gazelka
Minnesota Senate
Senate District 9, R

Speaker Melissa Hortman
Minnesota House of Representatives
House District 36B, DFL

Minority Leader Tom Bakk
Minnesota Senate
Senate District 3, DFL

Minority Leader Kurt Daudt
Minnesota House of Representatives
House District 31A, R

Assistant Majority Leader Eric Pratt
Chair, Jobs and Economic Growth Finance and Policy Committee
Minnesota Senate
Senate District 55, R

Representative Tim Mahoney
Chair, Jobs and Economic Development Finance Division
Minnesota House of Representatives
House District 67A, DFL