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July 8, 2015

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

I want to thank you for your dedication to upholding high standards for federal procurement and to ask that you continue to improve these standards to ensure that federal contractors are using taxpayer funds in the most effective way. Within your first month in office, you issued an Executive Order to encourage federal agencies to use Project Labor Agreements (PLAs) in construction projects. I applaud this effort to improve accountability in large-scale projects that are prone to cost overruns and other misuses of government resources. PLAs provide much-needed stability and transparency to federal construction projects. By negotiating the terms of an agreement, including wages and hours, prior to initiating a plan, a federal agency can ensure the project's completion and demonstrate that it is committed to protecting its workforce.

My home state of New York boasts an abundant utilization of Project Labor Agreements (PLAs) and was even cited in the Department of Labor's analysis titled "Implementation of Project Labor Agreements in Federal Construction Projects." In its study from 2011, the Department of Labor makes several recommendations to improve PLA adoption in the federal government, including adding provisions to improve safety and training.

I write to urge you to take the Department of Labor's suggestions under advisement by urging federal agencies to enter into Project Labor Agreements (PLAs) with contractors that graduate apprentices from certified apprenticeship programs. The DOL study cited a case study involving the New York City School Construction Authority, which included apprenticeships in its PLA. Apprenticeship programs train students in workplace safety and give these students the tools they need to have successful careers.

Secretary Perez recognized that apprenticeships are the "gold standard" in workforce development during his speech to the Building and Construction Trades Department in March of 2014. In today's competitive global economy, the federal government should be the leader in helping to develop a highly-skilled and well-trained workforce. Apprenticeships also offer an opportunity for women and other minorities to work in the construction field.

Including apprenticeships in Project Labor Agreements (PLAs) has fiscal benefits as well. Apprenticeships bear no cost to anyone but the trades that provide them, who do so voluntarily because



they understand their importance. There can be significant savings to the taxpayer on large-scale construction projects by employing apprentices, while still maintaining a high-level of skill and accountability.

I look forward to hearing your thoughts on encouraging apprenticeships in Project Labor Agreements (PLAs) in federal construction projects. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Kathleen M. Rice

Member of Congress

cc: Secretary Thomas Perez
U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Ave NW
Washington, D.C. 20001