

March 16, 2022

Dear Chair Noor:

On behalf of the 28,000 members and family members of Laborers' International Union of North America (LIUNA) Minnesota and North Dakota, I am writing in support of HF 3953 (Berg), the Building Strong Communities appropriation request.

One of LIUNA's top priorities for the 2022 Legislative Session is to grow diversity and inclusion in the construction industry and workforce training through expanded training and career opportunities for women, veterans and people of color through Registered Apprenticeship Programs. LIUNA's strength comes from our diverse and multiracial membership. We are proud to operate Minnesota's largest and most diverse skilled construction Registered Apprenticeship Program. We partner with more than 800 union contractors to provide approximately 150,000 training hours per year at our training center in Lino Lakes.

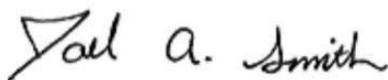
The Building Strong Communities program is a multi-trade apprenticeship preparatory program that aligns stakeholders to provide industry driven apprenticeship readiness pathways into union construction careers. The program offers participants the opportunity to receive Union-endorsed training, exposure and a "foot in the door" to a career in the trades. Program graduates have an opportunity to interview with participating Construction Trade Unions and Contractors.

HF 3953 appropriates \$300,000 in fiscal year 2023 from the general fund to the commissioner of employment and economic development for a grant to Building Strong Communities, Inc. for a statewide apprenticeship readiness program to prepare women, BIPOC community members, and veterans to enter the building and construction trades.

Now is the time to build on our progress and expand union construction career opportunities for women, veterans and people of color. We need to seize the mounting opportunities presented with the culmination of the passage of the \$1.9 billion 2020 Local Jobs and Projects Act, the \$1.2 trillion Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021, and the Legislature's anticipated passing of a large infrastructure jobs bill in the 2022 Legislative Session. Together, trade unions, private contractors, schools, government and community partners can recruit and retain a stronger, local and more diverse skilled construction workforce to build the infrastructure fueling Minnesota's economic prosperity. Again, we urge your support for the Building Strong Communities appropriation request.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,



Joel Smith
President and Business Manager
LIUNA Minnesota and North Dakota