

April 1, 2023

Senate Bill 125 Proponent Testimony

Cameron Bechtel

[ncbechtel@hjbecker.com](mailto:ncbechtel@hjbecker.com)

Harold J. Becker Company

3946 Indian Ripple Road, Dayton, Ohio 45440

Chairman Koehler, Vice Chair Reynolds, and Ranking Member Ingram and Members of the Senate Workforce Development Committee:

My name is Cameron Bechtel and I am the fourth generation owner of the Harold J. Becker Company. Since 1949, my company has provided quality moisture protection services to commercial and industrial customers in the private sector, as well as municipalities, counties, state and federal agencies. We offer a complete line of services, such as: roofing and sheet metal, waterproofing and dampproofing, roof maintenance programs, caulking and masonry restoration.

The Harold J. Becker Company serves customers in Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, Illinois, Michigan, West Virginia, Pennsylvania and Tennessee. Because we are not directly affiliated with any single manufacturer, we have the flexibility to work with our customers to find the best and most cost-effective system for their particular needs and applications.

I regret that I cannot be there in person today because of scheduling difficulties, but I wanted to take the opportunity to state my support for Senate Bill 125 to provide for a commercial roofing license in Ohio.

My company is signatory to the United Union of Roofers Waterproofers and Allied Workers as well as the International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers. Every one of my employees are just that – employees. We believe that a well-trained workforce with health and retirement benefits not only promotes a quality project for our customers, but also strong communities throughout the region. By supporting a good economic quality of life for both active employees and our retirees, we are doing our part in making the most of Ohio's current economic development boom for generations to come.

I am supportive of a commercial roofing license because while it maintains a low barrier to entry for new contractors and encourages the ongoing growth of our industry, it also helps

ensure that the financial benefit of this business actually goes to the contractors taking the risk. Roofing is a difficult and dangerous business that is heavily burdened by risk. Risks of weather; risks of price volatility; risks of subcontracting terms; and the biggest risk of all, the physical risks to our employees. I take all these risks very seriously. The idea that a contract broker or a labor broker can rake in all the profits and not share in this risk is abhorrent to me. By misclassifying employees as independent contractors, the entrepreneurial spirits who put themselves out there every day to do the work are pushed to take all the risk and when something goes wrong, those brokers just walk away.

And for legitimate independent contractors, just trying to get started with a small crew, getting on with these brokers seems like a good deal, but without the right knowledge of the Ohio code, without the right liability insurance or workers compensation coverage, those would-be business leaders of the future get stuck in a spiral where they can't compete independently and become locked in and ultimately controlled by financial interests that have no interest in helping them become true businesses let alone true competitors.

Licensing does a myriad of great things for our industry and for increasing the safety of public spaces. I'm sure you'll hear lots of testimony about the structural benefits of this bill. But for me, it's about fostering the economic development balance that can be achieved by truly supporting emerging small businesses and creating a level playing field for roofing companies who build Ohio by investing in a skilled workforce and providing safe and stable lives for our employees.

I urge you and the rest of the General Assembly to pass Senate Bill 125 on an expedited basis. Ohio's current economic boom is our chance to build all local businesses: old and new; large and small; union and merit shop. This is our chance to build up our local communities at every level so that all Ohioans can benefit from this once in a generation opportunity.

Thank you for your service to our state and for your work on this much-needed legislation.