



March 21, 2022

Dear Members of the House Judiciary Finance and Civil Law Committee:

On behalf of the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce, a statewide organization representing more than 6,300 businesses and more than half a million employees throughout Minnesota, we appreciate the opportunity to share our opposition to HF 984 (Rep. Lislegard) requiring outside contractors working at oil refineries in Minnesota to have apprenticeship-level training.

It is important to note that our members across all industries are committed to safety. Not only is this commitment grounded in good business sense, many industries are highly regulated under very strong federal and state safety regulations. High asset facilities in particular utilize and prioritize experience, training, and safety records in their hiring process.

There is no specific safety incident or issue that this legislation is seeking to resolve. Nor is it clear where exactly Minnesota's laws and standards are deficient.

We oppose the idea that the state would mandate a private sector business to use one particular workforce over the other. Furthermore, these provisions would change how these businesses work with their contractors who currently (and for decades) have operated safely and effectively in Minnesota. We support various apprenticeship programs that offer an important pathway for training skilled workers, but recognize that those programs are not the only pathway to job safety and skills. Restricting the labor force makes it harder to hire workers and could potentially discount workers with the highest safety records.

Finally, in addition to our fundamental and principled opposition to a proposal of this kind, these provisions are unworkable. There are a number of technical issues with how the legislation is drafted resulting in a number of unintended consequences. There are problems with how a "skilled and trained workforce" is defined to which classes of jobs are subject to these requirements. It does not include provisions to address where there is currently a lack of an apprenticeship program, if a union cannot meet the employment needs of these facilities, and whether the bill will abrogate existing contracts. These issues, and others, make the proposed penalties and civil actions all the more egregious.

For these reasons, we respectfully encourage a "no" vote on HF 984 and appreciate the opportunity to share our opposition.

Sincerely,

Lauryn Schothorst

Director, Workplace Management and Workforce Development Policy
Minnesota Chamber of Commerce