



Minnesota Utility Contractors Association

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VIA EMAIL

Minnesota House Labor, Industry, Veterans and Military Affairs Finance Policy Committee
St. Paul, MN 55155

March 10, 2021

RE: Opposition to HF984 'Required Apprenticeship-level training'

Dear Representative Ecklund and Committee Members,

The Minnesota Utility Contractors Association (MUCA) serves over 140 companies across Minnesota engaged in underground utility construction that installs and maintains our critical infrastructure necessary for life: including clean water, storm water drainage, sewer and wastewater systems, gas, electric, telecom, and other utilities.

MUCA opposes HF984 as it assumes the only path to proper apprenticeship is through a union-backed program. Many organizations, like MUCA, provide highly specialized training, built by industry-for industry, without any involvement from any union. Our Pipelayers Certification and Erosion Control Construction Site Management are just two examples. The vast majority of MUCA Members (and non-members) utilizing these certification programs are union members – and it is used for both initial certification (apprentices) and re-certification.

Similarly, my former employer, the MEA Energy Association, based in Bloomington, MN, developed complete Operator Qualification (OQ) Certification for the natural gas industry including electric safety, hazardous emergency response, and preventing accidental ignition. Again, overwhelmingly union members are being certified in "OQ" by a program that was built by industry-for industry through a trade association.

Please respect your industry associations as valuable resources for training, qualifications and certifications of industry personnel and oppose this attempt to force union programs as the only solution.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephanie Menning". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Stephanie Menning, CAE, IOM
Executive Director
Minnesota Utility Contractors Association

OUR MISSION

To promote the underground utility industry by providing safety training, continuing education, scholarships and legislative relations.

OUR VALUES

Honest Communications
Transparent Leadership
Authentic Engagement