



STATE OF MARYLAND

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Wes Moore

DIRECTIVE

TO: Portia Wu, Secretary, Maryland Department of Labor
Devki Virk, Commissioner of Labor and Industry, Maryland Department of Labor

FROM: Governor Wes Moore

RE: Prevailing Wage Determinations for Underground Utility Construction

DATE: April 10, 2026

The Maryland Commissioner of Labor and Industry recently issued new prevailing wage rates for specific underground utility construction classifications pursuant to Maryland Code Ann. Public Utilities Article (“PUA”) § 5-305. These changes come at a time of significant cost increase and rapid transitions in the energy industry. Rising energy costs also stand to have a significant impact on Marylanders. My Administration has been fully committed to reducing energy costs for Maryland residents and businesses. Before these new rates are fully implemented, it is critical to understand and analyze the impacts of these wages on our energy markets, consumers, and workers.

An additional area of concern is the economic impact of these new prevailing wage rates, which could disproportionately impact small and minority-owned businesses in Baltimore City. As Marylanders navigate this period of unprecedented economic uncertainty and an affordability crisis, it is imperative that we understand whether these wage rates will work against the progress my Administration has made with respect to Baltimore City’s continued and sustained economic growth and development.

The application of prevailing wage beyond the context of state-funded contracts, including in utility construction, presents additional issues regarding implementation and administration. It is my understanding that the General Assembly has indicated an intent to convene a working group to review and provide guidance on the applicability of prevailing wage outside of the public works context.

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In light of these considerable implications and pursuant to my authority as the head of the executive branch of State government under Article II, Section 1 of the Maryland Constitution, as well as Section 3-302 of the State Government Article of the Maryland Code, I hereby direct the Department of Labor, Division of Labor and Industry to pause the implementation of the newly-issued rates for the specific underground utility classifications of Underground Cable Splicer, Underground Lineworker, and Underground Gas Mechanic in all jurisdictions, until a thorough review of the impact of PUA § 5-305 and assessment of potential impacts to energy costs and local economies can be conducted.

This Directive is effective as of the date indicated above, and shall remain in force until further notice.



Wes Moore
Governor