



Pennsylvania State Building and Construction Trades Council AFL-CIO

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**Testimony before the
Pennsylvania Institutional Sustainability & Innovation Committee
Public Hearing on Life Sciences Innovation in Pennsylvania
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**TESTIMONY BY: Robert S. Bair, President
Pennsylvania Building and Construction Trades Council**

Thank you, members of the committee, for hearing my testimony today.

I represent over 130,000 union Building Trades members in Pennsylvania, many of whom make a very good living working with our partners in the Life Science/Meds and Eds industry. The industry touches all parts of the commonwealth, from the southeast to central Pennsylvania, to the western side, and the northeast. We perform construction and maintenance work with Merck Chemical, Glaxo Smith Kline, Thermo Fisher Scientific and many others in this industry.

These industries provide hundreds of thousands of man hours of work for my members, which not only provides high quality wages but also allows for pension funds, annuity funds and healthcare funds so that my members and their families live solidly blue-collar middle-class lives. These industries allow us to grow our apprenticeship programs and offer more young men and women a chance to enter the building trades and achieve the American dream of home ownership, raising a family, and retiring with dignity.

In the halls of the capitol, we hear a lot about workforce development, economic development, and creating good jobs. Well, I'm here today to remind this committee and both chambers in this building we have an existing industry that does all of that and giving this industry and our partners incentives to continue to grow only accelerates what we want to accomplish. I hear from my Philadelphia Trades Council, my Reading Building Trades Council, my Central PA Trades Council and many others about how critical these industry partners are to keeping my Councils and their members working. They all tell me the same thing: go up on the hill and fight for more jobs in this industry.

I could bore you with statistics, but I'd rather tell you the success stories. Like an apprentice who, because of Merck in Lansdale, was able to work there and save enough to purchase a home. Or myself, who in 1995 and 1996, when construction work was very slow, kept a roof over my head, and food on my table due to Merck Chemical in Danville.

To say these industries are important to Pennsylvania is an understatement, they are critical to the success of this Commonwealth growing economic prosperity for all of us.

Thank you for your time today.