

March 1, 2021

House Labor Committee
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903

RE: **Bill 2021-H 5717**
An Act relating to Public Property and Works – Minority Business Enterprise
Statement opposing Bill 2021- H 5717

Dear Sir/Madam:

Bill 2021-H 5717 poses to eliminate women-owned businesses as being eligible for status as Minority Business Enterprises (MBEs) in the state of Rhode Island. This is greatly detrimental to women who are already poorly represented in the workplace and specifically at the top levels of firms. While women comprise approximately 50% of the population, they represent approximately 29% of senior management in the workplace, and only 7% of the CEO roles for the Fortune 500 companies in the US. The intent of the MBE is to assist under-represented segments of the population to own and run businesses. The elimination of women as a minority enterprise from this program is clearly an infringement of the very premise of the program. I stand **opposed to this bill and encourage the House Labor Committee to vote against this bill.**

McMahon is a transportation engineering and planning firm with an office in Lincoln, RI. McMahon is not an MBE firm. However, we firmly support MBE firms, including women-owned businesses, and recognize the value of supporting minorities in their business pursuits for the good of society as a whole. In this time of the Covid-19 pandemic and the heightened awareness of the values and benefits of diversity, inclusion and equity, it is counterintuitive to eliminate an enabling mechanism to a group of the population that is under-represented in the business community. **Again, we stand opposed to this bill and encourage you to vote against it.**

Sincerely,



Maureen Chlebek, P. E., PTOE
Vice President and NE Regional Manager