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New Hampshire House Committee on Executive Departments and Administration (ED&A)

Subject: AISC Support of SB 438

Good morning and thank you to the Chair and members of the Committee for the opportunity to provide testimony today in support of SB 438.

My name is David Fennell, and I am a Structural Steel Specialist for the American Institute of Steel Construction. We are a non-partisan, not-for-profit technical institute and trade association that has been the leading advocate and trusted resource for the American structural steel industry since 1921. AISC represents nearly 1,000 domestic structural steel fabricators, 11 of which are located within the state of New Hampshire and who employ nearly 575 of your state's citizens.

This bill, an Act establishing state and local procurement policies intended to promote the use of American materials, is a common-sense proposal, in-line with the successes of numerous other states and municipalities to invest public dollars back to the tax-paying public. Buy American policies create good-paying jobs here at home, expand the tax base, and will improve the quality of life for New Hampshire residents.

However, in the absence of a state-wide policy in New Hampshire, damage has been done. Over the last decade, we've seen our fabricator membership losses in the New England States occur 20% more frequently than the national average. This is caused by unfair competition from across our borders that materially harm New Hampshire companies.

The public wants Buy America. According to a 2021 Reuters poll, nearly two thirds of Americans want their government to buy goods made in America. Government spending should not promote a race to the bottom on pricing, rather, public policy should be deliberate in raising up and supporting those tax-paying constituents, improving their quality of life, and expanding the tax base in a self-reinforcing cycle of American prosperity.

And despite rumors to the contrary, the US steel fabrication industry is ready and willing to deliver. According to our 2021 first quarter business barometer survey, nearly half of our member steel fabricators are significantly operating at under-capacity. Over half of our respondents said they have the ability to increase capacity up to 15%, and another quarter said they could increase even higher.

Lastly, you may not think that environmentalism has anything to do with Buy America, but when it comes to steel, they are closely intertwined. Among the seven largest steel-producing countries in the world, American steel has the lowest carbon footprint and the lowest energy intensity. Choosing American steel and American manufacturing by passing strong Buy American legislation will go hand in hand with the State of New Hampshire's carbon emission reduction goals.

On behalf of the American Institute of Steel Construction and the New Hampshire steel fabrication community, I urge you to support this important piece of legislation.

Thank you,

David A. Fennell

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