

GOVERNOR MARTIN O'MALLEY

Construction and Energy Workforce Solutions Conference
July 21, 2009

Thank you all very, very much. I am so pumped up to see all of you here bright and early this morning and focused on this. I just came back from a meeting in Biloxi, Mississippi with the National Governor's Association. And let me just say it's great to be in an optimistic room, with a group of optimistic people who are focused on the future.

I want to thank Tom Perez for his tremendous leadership in the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation, and for all that he's done with Eric Seleznow and all of you in this room. Tom, as you may have figured out, is part of our somewhat secret goal here in Maryland of quietly taking over the Obama Administration. (Laughter.) We're on our way, by God. A few more cabinet picks placed in the right places and we'll really secure that investment pipeline for Maryland. I told the President, please take your time with Perez's confirmation, we want him to be fully vetted, we don't need him to go any place any time soon.

It is great to be with all of you. I wanted to let you know how grateful I am to you for the hard work that you've put into these two very strong reports, the Construction Industry Initiative Draft Report and also the Energy Industry Initiative Draft Report. Both of them very interrelated.

I want to thank Martin Knott for all of us his great leadership, but we're going to buy him socks for the next meeting. (Laughter.) It is summertime, it is. It's sustainable sock wear for Martin.

I also want to thank Gino Gemignani from Whiting Turner and I want to thank the Maryland Solar Industry Association, along with Jim Rzepkowski from Constellation Energy, Eric Seleznow, who was mentioned before, and his talented team at the Governor's Workforce Investment Board.

We're doing important things, and we're doing them better and in a more forward-leaning way than most any other state in the union. And that's what we expect of one another, isn't it? Something about Maryland. If we're not leading, we feel like there's something wrong with us, because it's our history, our legacy, to lead.

I'm fond of telling the story of the Maryland 400, who on Brooklyn Heights covered Washington's retreat when the American Revolution was this close to being snuffed out. And amid the carnage all around them and the fog of battle and the smoke and the retreat of states on their left and states on their right, somehow those Marylanders

found it within themselves to continue to move forward. That's who we are and that's what you're doing today.

I want you to do me a favor, turn to your neighbor and tell them we're all in this together. Go ahead, do that. Turn to your other neighbor now and tell them we're going to come through this together.

I want to thank Sandy Rosenberg also, for his leadership, and Jim Wines, and everyone here who is working to help us push our mission forward.

And what is that mission? That mission is to strengthen and grow the ranks of an upwardly mobile middle class, to improve public safety and public education in every part of our State, and to expand opportunity; the opportunity to learn and to earn, the opportunity to enjoy the health of the people we love (and the workers upon whose talents all of us depend) and also to expand the opportunity to enjoy the health of our environment, for ourselves and for those citizens who are not yet born.

We are continuing that mission and we are counting on your continued help and hard work as we move forward in shared pursuit of progress towards those priorities.

We see some very real reasons for optimism in the synergy that's on display here today between our construction industry and our energy sector – in our shared drive and responsibility to achieve a more sustainable future; more sustainable in terms of a more prosperous economic future, a more secure and independent energy future, and a better future for all of our kids.

It's a synergy which reminds us that just as our challenges are interrelated, so too are the solutions. It's all about connections.

Just what are these challenges? Tom touched on them. And for any of you who have been to a cabinet meeting of your O'Malley/Brown Administration you've heard them as well.

They are not only the great challenges for our State, but they're the great challenges for our country. And they may even be -- in fact, they are -- the great challenges for humanity. It's our job to lead in skills, it's our job to lead in security, and it's our job to lead in sustainability.

And as we seek to address these challenges together, I believe that we're living in a transformational time. Paul Hawken in his book, *Blessed Unrest*, talks about the science of our situation, looking at climate change and the environment, and a number of

species that are now extinct, and the degree to which we have out-fished the resources of our oceans.

He says that looking at the signs, it's very hard not to be pessimistic. But in looking at the talents, the resolve, the coalescing of humanity and our innovative human capacity to confront these challenges, it's really hard not to be optimistic. And I hope you sense that as you look around at your neighbors in this room.

We have set big goals for the State of Maryland and we don't apologize for it. We are setting a goal of creating 100,000 green sector jobs by 2015. We're setting goals for reducing energy consumption and lowering our carbon footprint, and raising our renewable energy portfolio 20 percent by 2022.

And I think you'd all agree that Maryland's construction industry is an essential piece and it is a critically important piece of this puzzle,... of figuring out how to bring about a better, safer, more secure, and more prosperous and more sustainable future.

In our brief time together this morning I wanted to touch on a few things that we're doing together to leverage that synergy -- to leverage those connections between the industries represented in this room --- as we seek to create jobs, to grow our economy, and to heal our planet.

I want to touch on Maryland's construction sector. I want to touch on the Maryland Center for Construction Education and Innovation. And I also want to talk more broadly about the Greener Jobs Initiative that we are so focused on and so engaged in here in Maryland.

MARYLAND'S CONSTRUCTION SECTOR

Let me talk first about Maryland's construction sector, because I believe that its value and fundamental importance to our State is sometimes overlooked.

I was with some governors in Biloxi, and for them, growth is an elusive thing that they haven't seen for many, many years in their states. In Maryland, sometimes we look at headlines for BRAC and we say, *"oh, my goodness, it's going to create traffic, what a bad thing, all those jobs coming here."*

I was Mayor of Baltimore for seven years, beginning my service there after 30 years of the most rapid population loss of any big city in America. So between the two choices of growth and shrinkage, I'll pick growth any day.

I'm not sure if you saw the articles in the paper yesterday, I believe it was in USA Today where I saw it. They had talked about the news that the housing industry is stabilizing. That's great news. Our economic come-back might be a V, but most economists are saying now probably not. It's more likely a U or an L. Whether it's a U or whether it's an L, stabilization is the first step to climbing out of the recession.

As we work together to climb our way out, I'm sure that no one in this room needs to be reminded that the construction industry represents Maryland's fifth largest private employer, providing jobs for 178,000 Marylanders, accounting for seven percent of our State's workforce.

In the short term, we are turning to our construction industry as we invest the Federal dollars that are coming to Maryland from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

If you have not gone on your State Recovery and Reinvestment Act website, I recommend you do so. Not only is it a great help for those of you who are suffering from insomnia, wondering how you're going to make ends meet and keep people employed, but it also should make you proud of a government that actually works in an open and transparent way to be able to put in your address and to click on that map and see where these investments are happening.

In the longer term we're going to continue to lean on your sector, as the Federal Base Realignment and Closure process, BRAC, brings an array of new opportunities to our State. Lieutenant Governor Brown heads our BRAC subcabinet. All of these military installations are almost little metro economies in and of themselves. Very important to our short term economic growth.

Despite the fact that we in Maryland have one of the most highly skilled workforces in America, I know that many of your companies have been struggling to recruit and to attract the type of workers that have the skills that your business needs -- that the construction industry needs. The demands of your industry is becoming much more technically advanced as we learn more and more about how to build in more sustainable ways.

THE MARYLAND CENTER FOR CONSTRUCTION EDUCATION & INNOVATION

At the State level, therefore, it's a priority of the O'Malley/Brown Administration to ensure that we have an adequate pipeline of qualified workers to meet the 21st Century demands of Maryland's construction industry,... which leads me to the Maryland Center for Construction Education & Innovation; something that I know

you all have talked about, that you've worked at.

Today we are announcing the creation of this Center, which will be hosted at Towson University.

What is it? The Center will act as an industry education and training clearinghouse and coordinator, working in tandem with four year colleges, universities, and those very nimble community colleges – community colleges, which I understand President Obama wants to invest greater dollars in. He had hoped to do that in the first stimulus, but it got kind of cut out as he worked to get 51 votes in the Senate.

The Center will build upon our existing efforts on Career and Technical Education, or CTE, and will be an example of business and labor working together. In addition to CTE it will focus on the STEM disciplines that Maryland's own Norm Augustine has championed for years.

The disciplines of science, technology, engineering and math are areas where so many other countries are starting to bypass the United States, not only in terms of sheer volume, but also in terms of their level of skills.

It's the development of those skills, CTE and STEM together, that is really the foundation upon which all of Maryland's future job growth is based. It depends on the talents and skills of our people.

Guiding our efforts to incorporate development of CTE and STEM at the earliest levels of education and up through the community colleges, the job training efforts, four-year colleges and the like, is our P-20 Council. That is grade P being pre-kindergarten, up through 20, post high school and college work.

For those of you who may not be familiar with the Council, we created it to increase the alignment between what had been various steps that had big gaps in them, in order to create that conveyor belt pipeline of skilled workers for the diversity of our economy between the needs of our partners in the business community and the curricula being designed by our education community.

As we seek to improve STEM training throughout our State, I've asked our State Board of Education, along with the United States Secretary of Education Arne Duncan -- who at one time was the CEO of the City of Chicago's Public Schools, that big school district, and is therefore someone who understands the enormous opportunities that exist in our big cities if we can get our act together as a nation on education -- I've asked them to help us in taking specific steps and actions to include

environmental literacy in our STEM curricula.

I don't know about you, but my kids are far more tuned-in to the challenges that we face not only as citizens of Maryland and citizens of the United States, but citizens of the planet, and this stuff is exciting to them.

We want to incorporate environmental literacy into the STEM curricula, along with financial literacy and other things and make it real. Teaching our kids in 1950s ways when we've got challenges in 2009, seems like we're selling their imagination, their innovation and their ambition short.

So my hope is that we will be able to get environmentally minded students more interested in STEM and STEM students more interested in protecting our environment through better design and building skills and all of those things with which you all are so familiar.

Of course, improving STEM and CTE in Maryland doesn't happen if you're unable to protect and maintain what you already have. And what do we already have? Not by chance, but by choice, we have -- according to Education Week Magazine -- the number one public school system in America. Not number two, not number three, not number five, not ten. We have the number one public school system in America.

Why is that? Because in even really difficult times, you and I together have increased our State investment in education by 72 percent. There's not another state that's doing that.

You combine that with the fact that for four years in a row, we've had a zero percent increase in college tuition for in-state kids at University of Maryland System schools, and you'll see that we not only talk the talk, we together walk the walk of making those investments in the talents of our people.

And as a return on our investment, test scores are up in every county, they're up in every grade, up in every subject, across every single demographic line. In fact, later on today, at 3:30 for those of you that want to come along, we're going to be with Secretary Duncan as he joins CEO Alonso in Baltimore City to announce the latest round of test scores in the City of Baltimore. Get this, eight years ago not one grade in the City of Baltimore scored majority proficient in reading. Not one in the greatest city in America and the birthplace of the Star Spangled Banner. Today grades 1 through 8 -- don't tell the press until 3:30 -- grades 1 through 8 are now majority proficient in reading. And grades 1 through 6 are majority proficient in math.

What's going on in the City of Baltimore is nothing short of one of the biggest turn-around stories in a big city's educational system.

THE MARYLAND GREENER JOBS INITIATIVE

Let me talk about the broader Maryland Greener Jobs Initiative. It is designed to support the emerging green sector. In other places I've visited, Stockholm, for example, I've looked at the things that they were doing there for which we wonder here whether or not they're possible. In Sweden, they're actually already doing them. In fact, they've been doing them for ten years. Whether you call it Green Tech, the Green Sector, Clean Tech -- whatever you want to call it, it is the future.

Our Greener Jobs Initiative in Maryland is centered on five core strategies.

Number one, we're working to leverage our competitive economic assets, whether it's our workforce, whether it's our Federal facilities, or the strengths of our business community -- and I might also add, especially when it comes to doing Federal work, the diversity of our business community -- to attract, expand and retain green jobs in Maryland.

Number two, we're working with our existing industries to assist them in adopting more sustainable practices and learning about more sustainable practices. Helping them to protect their own bottom line, while also helping our planet and creating jobs for Maryland based companies that provide services like installing solar panels, retrofitting buildings to make them energy efficient.

Number three, we're promoting research, generation and advancement of green energy in Maryland through such strategies as creating incentives for homeowners and businesses to utilize cleaner energy. Malcolm Woolfe is here from our Maryland Energy Administration, who has been working hard on these efforts. What's more we're embracing strategies like converting significant percentages of our State vehicle and public transit fleet to cleaner vehicles and utilizing our new Clean Energy Center, which was opened in Montgomery County approximately three months ago.

Number four, we're working to provide our existing workforce and future graduates with the skills they need for green-collar jobs. I mentioned before the emphasis on STEM and CTE. We're not contenting ourselves with being the best in America, we want to be the best in the world.

We're also furthering our efforts by partnering with organized labor with apprenticeship programs, and we're working with community colleges to help them

adopt green skills-training in their curricula, with some sort of standardization and minimum standards that make sure that when a person goes through that curriculum, that they actually do have the skills to come and work at your company.

Number five, we're relentlessly measuring performance, sharing information and tracking our progress through our StateStat initiative and what we call the Maryland Index of Sustainable Prosperity.

Why? Because we believe that a core set of principles are fundamental in the pursuit of progress; among them setting goals, measuring performance, broadly sharing information rather than hoarding it, and holding our efforts and public institutions accountable -- that's what it's all about -- to the public.

CONCLUSION

Let me conclude by once again thanking all of you for everything that you're doing to help our State through these difficult times and to build the stronger future for our State that all of us prefer.

We are all in this together. We are all in this together. And as Marylanders, we've always proven that tough times don't last, but tough people do.

With your help, we are indeed going to come through these times together. We're going to come through this sooner than other states in the union. And I think, I know, I believe we are going to do it in a way that inspires the rest of our country as well.

Thanks very, very much. (Applause.)