September 17, 2019

The Honorable Wilbur Ross        Ms. Ivanka Trump
Secretary of Commerce            Special Assistant to the President
1401 Constitution Ave., NW       The White House
Washington, D.C. 20230           Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Secretary Ross and Ms. Trump:

The undersigned organizations, who collectively represent the multiple facets of the home construction and remodeling industry, urge you to work expeditiously to develop strategies to fill the desperate need for skilled workers in the construction industry. As the leaders of the American Workforce Policy Advisory Board (Advisory Board) we ask that you fully engage with the housing sector to assess the workforce needs of our vital industry and request a meeting with you to discuss the unique needs and capabilities of the housing sector’s workforce.

We share the goals of the Advisory Board: the creation of a public campaign to promote skills training as a pathway to good-paying jobs; creating a robust information and data network for employers and employees; recommending new strategies to marry worker-recruitment candidates, training opportunities and employers; and ensuring the private sector leads in the effort by measuring and recognizing workforce training investment by employers. Our industry stands ready to help you accomplish this important task.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics JOLTS data shows that the number of open construction sector jobs stands at approximately 350,000. With unemployment remaining at a historically low rate of 3.7%, we must find new ways to encourage potential workers to view the skilled trades as a viable, worthy pathway to a good-paying job and career.

The current housing affordability crisis facing our nation is exacerbated by the lack of and rising cost of skilled labor. Our organizations are committed to solving this problem through our industry efforts. We stand ready to work with you and the Advisory Board to support President Trump’s National Council for the America Worker and request a meeting with you to discuss the housing sector’s workforce needs.
Sincerely,

International Code Council  
Kitchen Cabinet Manufacturers Association  
National Association of Home Builders  
National Kitchen and Bath Association  
National Lumber & Building Material Dealers Association  
National Tile Contractors Association  
National Wood Flooring Association  
Natural Stone Institute  
Plumbing Heating Cooling Contractors National Association  
Structural Insulated Panel Association  
Window & Door Dealers Alliance  
Window and Door Manufacturers Association  

Cc: The Honorable Patrick Pizzella, Acting Secretary, Department of Labor  
Senator Lamar Alexander, Chairman, Senate H.E.L.P. Committee  
Senator Patty Murray, Ranking Member, Senate H.E.L.P. Committee  
Rep. Robert C. Scott, Chairman, House Education and Labor Committee  
Rep. Virginia Foxx, Ranking Member, House Education and Labor Committee