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Commerce Department to bring more women to construction industry

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Boston, MA The U.S. Department of Commerce presented the Million Women in Construction Community Pledge to bring more women into the construction workforce – as well as several leading construction companies that have signed on to the pledge. These companies are Baker Construction, Gilbane Building Company, McKissack & McKissack, Mortenson, Power Design, Shawmut Design and Construction, and Suffolk. In addition, U.S. secretary of commerce Gina Raimondo is making an industry-wide call for more companies, unions, and training organizations to sign on to the pledge.

By signing on to the pledge, leaders in the industry are demonstrating an ongoing commitment to increase women's access to training, jobs and leadership opportunities.

This follows an announcement made earlier this month launching the CHIPS Women in Construction Framework. Construction companies, unions, and training organizations can join the initiative by pledging to focus on or scale up equitable hiring and workforce development efforts that create broader pipelines and opportunities for women. This industry-wide call to action encourages signers to voluntarily take action by utilizing best practices, including building community partnerships to reach women and girls, investing in solutions that increase supportive services such as child care, and fostering safe, healthy, and respectful workplaces.

“President Biden’s Investing in America agenda is creating a construction boom all over the country, and with that boom comes a huge increase in jobs and opportunities for workers in construction and the trades. But right now, women make up less than 11% of jobs in construction and only 4% in skilled trades. Many of these are good-paying, quality jobs you can get without a college degree, and women deserve equal opportunity for these jobs,” said secretary Raimondo. “If we’re going to meet this moment, we need more women in the construction, and we need an industry-wide commitment, which is why I’m calling on everyone – contractors, labor unions, training organizations – to join our Community Pledge to commit to solutions and support proven strategies that help overcome barriers faced by women and underserved communities in construction and the trades.”

The announcement comes after a roundtable of construction industry leaders, convened by The Real Estate Roundtable and attended by secretary Raimondo, to discuss the Million Women in Construction Community Pledge.

“The construction industry continues to face significant labor challenges due to the aging workforce

and dwindling number of young people entering the construction field. There is a critical need to attract more talent and diversify our workforce to ensure we have the resources to build our cities and grow our economy,” said John Fish, chair of The Real Estate Roundtable and chairman and CEO of Suffolk. “Suffolk is honored and privileged to be one of the first companies to commit to Secretary Raimondo’s inspiring Million Women in Construction Pledge. As an organization that has long been committed to rebuilding the ratio of women in the construction industry, we are proud to play a leadership role in inspiring other organizations to commit to this effort and help position our American workforce for future growth and success.”

The Million Women in Construction initiative is a nationwide call to action for the construction industry – construction contractors, trade unions, and training institutions – to commit to bold steps that will ensure a robust and diverse workforce in the years ahead. It will be necessary to recruit, train, hire, and retain thousands of new and non-traditional workers – the next generation of skilled laborers and leaders who are prepared to rebuild U.S. infrastructure and supply chains and complement Federal government investments.

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