



April 29, 2026

The Honorable Sabrina Cervantes
Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 412
Sacramento, CA 95816

RE: SB 1185 (Cortese): Pharmaceutical facilities: skilled and trained workforce – OPPOSE

Senator Cervantes:

Associated Builders and Contractors of California (ABC CA) is a statewide organization representing working Californians in carpentry, construction, construction craft laborer, electrical, low voltage, painting, plumbing, pipefitting, and sheet metal who are building commercial, industrial and affordable housing projects, and we write to express our respectful opposition to SB 1185 (Cortese). This measure applies “skilled and trained” and prevailing wage requirements for all construction and maintenance work at pharmaceutical facilities, including private-sector projects, and would impose penalties up to \$5,000-\$10,000 per month for noncompliance.

SB 1185 represents a significant and unwarranted expansion of state-mandated workforce requirements into private-sector construction. Historically, these requirements have been limited to public works and publicly funded projects, with only narrow extensions to private facilities that present uniquely high risks of combustion or chemical volatility, such as oil refineries or hydrogen production facilities. Pharmaceutical facilities do not present comparable hazards, yet this measure imposes the same requirements on the construction and maintenance of private research and manufacturing facilities, marking a clear departure from longstanding policy.

Private developers already have strong incentives to select qualified contractors based on experience, safety record, and technical expertise. SB 1185 would replace that judgment with a rigid, state-imposed hiring structure, regardless of the specific needs of a project. In doing so, it removes flexibility from a highly specialized industry that relies on precision, innovation, and project-specific expertise.

The bill’s workforce mandate would prevent many licensed, experienced contractors from performing work at pharmaceutical facilities solely because they cannot meet rigid apprenticeship-graduation thresholds. These thresholds were designed for public works and do not reflect the structure of many trades, the availability of apprenticeship programs across

regions, or the staffing realities of private-sector construction. As a result, SB 1185 would exclude a portion of the qualified workforce from participating in private projects, even when those contractors meet all state licensing, safety, and wage requirements.

SB 1185 also imposes new administrative burdens on private projects, including monthly worker-level data reporting requirements to the Labor Commissioner, as well as penalties ranging from \$5,000 to \$10,000 per month for noncompliance. These requirements add complexity and cost without any demonstrated benefit to project outcomes.

These mandates will increase the cost of constructing and maintaining pharmaceutical facilities in California. Those increased costs will ultimately be reflected in the price of medications developed and produced in this state. Californians are already facing rising health care costs. Recent reductions in federal funding for Medicare and medical research have placed additional strain on the health care system. Imposing further cost pressures on the development of critical medical infrastructure is ill-timed and counterproductive.

SB 1185 will limit workforce participation, reduce flexibility in private development, and increase costs across the pharmaceutical sector without improving safety or performance.

For these reasons, ABC CA respectfully opposes SB 1185.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Greg Gutierrez", with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Greg Gutierrez
Chair of the Board

cc: Senator Dave Cortese
Senator Brian Jones
Senate Appropriations Committee Members