



June 11, 2019

Honorable Jeffrey Roy, House Chairman
Honorable Anne Gobi, Senate Chairwoman
Joint Committee on Higher Education
State House, Room 472
Boston, Massachusetts 02133

Dear Chairman Roy, Chairwoman Gobi and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the over 250 member companies of the Trucking Association of Massachusetts (TAM), I am writing to urge your strong support for House Bill 1205, relative to the training of tomorrow's truck drivers. This bipartisan initiative, which creates a Truck Driver Training Fund, will encourage the training of students and transitioning career professionals to meet the growing workforce needs of the trucking industry. Accordingly, I respectfully urge you to report this legislation favorably from the Committee.

In Massachusetts, the trucking industry is a key driver of economic growth: it accounts for about 1 out every of 12 jobs in the Commonwealth, or approximately 300,000 jobs in total as of 2017. According to the United States Bureau of Labor and Statistics, heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers make upwards of \$50,000 per year. These jobs don't require a college degree, unlike many jobs in today's market, making trucking an attractive profession for those looking to earn a steady income without first spending a lot of their own money and time to attend four or more years of school.

But despite the potential that truck driving offers, the industry is facing a driver shortage. According to the American Trucking Association, the industry will need to hire almost 900,000 new drivers nationally over the coming decade, with most of the demand resulting from retiring drivers and industry growth. At the same time, interest in the profession is waning, making it difficult for the industry to fill these vital positions. By 2026, the ATA forecasts that the industry could be facing a shortage of almost 175,000 drivers. When you consider that 93% of all goods transported into and within the Commonwealth are carried on a truck, it becomes clear that the driver shortage is a problem not just for the trucking industry, but the Commonwealth as a whole. Indeed, the driver shortage could cost Massachusetts to miss out on significant tax revenues: a study by the Dukakis Center for Urban Research and Policy at Northeastern University recently estimated that each local trucking employee generates about \$3,396 per year in state and local payroll, income and property taxes.

House Bill 1205, an Act Relative to Training Tomorrow's Truck Drivers, would create a mechanism for a wide variety of organizations and employers to train and hire truck drivers to fill the Commonwealth's driver shortage. By establishing a Truck Driver Training Fund, the bill would provide a source of funding by which employers and employer associations, local workforce

investment boards, institutions of higher education, vocational schools, and other organizations could finance programs, according to guidelines set by the Board of Higher Education, to support both the training of new student drivers and the retention and upgrading of existing trucking jobs.

In order to finance the Truck Driver Training Fund, the bill would create a \$5 surcharge on all applications for licensure or renewal of a commercial driver's license. This mechanism would ensure that the Training Fund would place no financial burden on most residents of the Commonwealth, and would distribute the cost evenly across the trucking industry. Organizations across the Commonwealth could then apply for grants, financed by the Truck Driver Training Fund, to operate training programs. This funding will be crucial in order to attract new drivers to fill the Commonwealth's driver shortage, providing good careers to thousands of drivers in the process.

I appreciate your consideration of House Bill 1205, An Act Relative to Training Tomorrow's Truck Drivers and I respectfully request that the Committee release the bill with a favorable report. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns. I look forward to working with the legislature on this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kevin R. Weeks".

Kevin Weeks
Executive Director