



October 2, 2023

Honorable William Straus, House Chair
Honorable Brendan Crighton, Senate Chair
Joint Committee on Transportation
State House, Room 134
Boston, Massachusetts 02133

Dear Chair Straus, Chair Crighton and Members of the Committee:

RE: Support for House Bill 3371, An Act Relative to Training Tomorrow's Trucking Workforce

Dear Chair Crighton, Chair Straus and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Trucking Association of Massachusetts (TAM), I am writing in strong support for House Bill 3371, An Act Relative to Training Tomorrow's Trucking Workforce. With the trucking industry experiencing one of its greatest workforce challenges in recent years, it is essential that the Commonwealth strengthen its pipeline for developing a new workforce for this vital industry.

As drafted, House Bill 3371 seeks to bring a new generation of qualified workers into the trucking profession by directing the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education to create a grant program, subject to appropriation, that would support training and education programs that address the workforce shortages in the commercial trucking industry. The applicable areas of the trucking workforce targeted would include truck drivers, mechanics, technicians, and ancillary support personnel. The grant program would be used to train students, create new jobs, retrain and upgrade existing jobs, and retrain existing workers to implement new technologies and to help meet the workforce needs of the trucking industry within the Commonwealth.

House Bill 3371 is an important initiative for growing the trucking industry in Massachusetts. The creation of this program will allow for the training of students and transitioning career professionals -- creating new jobs while improving the retainage and upgrading of existing jobs to help meet the growing workforce needs of the trucking industry. As reported by the American Trucking Associations (ATA), "there is no single cause of the driver shortage, but some of the primary factors include: high average age of current drivers, which leads to a high number of retirements; women making up only 7% of all drivers, well below their representation in the total workforce; the pandemic caused some drivers to leave the industry, [and] truck driver training schools trained far fewer drivers than normal in 2020. At current trends, the shortage could surpass 160,000 in 2030. This forecast is based on driver demographic trends, including gender and age, as well as expected freight growth. "Truck Driver Shortage Analysis Update 2021", American Trucking Associations (October 2021). (See https://www.trucking.org/sites/default/files/2021-10/ATA%20Driver%20Shortage%20Report%202021%20Executive%20Summary.FINAL_.pdf)

Truck drivers play a crucial role in the current economy. 93% of all goods transported into and within the Commonwealth have been on a truck. Every item on the shelves of Massachusetts retailers are filled with products transported by the trucking industry. With interest in the profession dwindling, there is a clear need to encourage this career path. The revitalization of the profession is important for more than

just the trucking companies, but the Commonwealth as a whole. This initiative will create a mechanism for a wide variety of organizations and employers to train and hire trucking professionals to fill the Commonwealth's workforce shortage.

I appreciate your consideration of this important matter and respectfully request that you issue a favorable report to this legislation. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to let me know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kevin R. Weeks". The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored background.

Kevin Weeks
Executive Director