

**Re: SB 479 An Act Establishing a CDL Training Program**

Co-Chair Fonfara, Co-Chair Scanlon, Ranking Member Martin, Ranking Member Cheeseman, and members of the Finance, Revenue & Bonding Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony. My name is Joe Sculley, I am President of the Motor Transport Association of Connecticut (MTAC), representing small business trucking companies in the State of Connecticut.

The US is estimated to be short 80,000 truck drivers nationwide, so MTAC very much appreciates the focus on recruiting new CDL drivers. We support the concept of this bill.

We do have some concerns with aspects of this bill.

CDL training schools are not 501(c)(3) organizations, they are for-profit entities. So for existing CDL training schools to be able to train CDL students under this bill, this 501(c)(3) requirement would have to be changed.

Lines 15 – 17 allow for “tuition expense support” for CDL students, a concept we support. That same section then discusses “the amounts of funds that may be provided to enrollees who have entered into an income share agreement...” It might be preferable to provide students with the opportunity to maximize tuition expense support before they commit to being part of an income share agreement.

Lines 25 – 28 discuss locations of training programs being in a “distressed municipality.” Our CDL training schools already exist in certain municipalities, some of which may be “distressed” or some which might not be. In order to maximize potential participation from CDL training schools, we suggest that provision be eliminated. For that same reason, we suggest the same thing regarding the limit of 3 locations in the state. Keep in mind that individuals who may live in a distressed municipality can attend a CDL training school, even if the location of a school is not necessarily in a distressed municipality.

Lines 54 – 61 discuss the state buying its own trucks, trailers, garages, etc. My read of this bill is that the intent is to work with existing CDL training schools. (*“The Office of Policy and Management shall administer the program and shall establish criteria for selecting the organizations that will provide training programs under such program”*) With that in mind, I don’t know why the state would need to purchase its own equipment. I hope the intent of this bill is not to start a CDL training school that would compete with private-sector CDL training schools.

We appreciate the focus on recruiting and training new CDL drivers. Thank you for your consideration.



ABOUT CT Trucking Industry

**85.8%**: number of Connecticut communities that depend exclusively on trucks to move their goods

**98.4%**: Percent of freight in Connecticut that is transported by truck

**\$3.5 billion**: total trucking industry wages paid in Connecticut (2019)

**62,990**: trucking industry jobs in Connecticut (2019)

**\$56,133**: average annual salary in trucking industry in Connecticut (2019)

**\$8,722**: average annual CT-imposed highway user fees paid by tractor trailers

**\$8,906**: average annual fed-imposed highway user fees paid by tractor trailers