

June 3,2022

Dear Chief Administrator Sue Fulton,

New Jerseyans have historically voiced frustration regarding the operation of the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission (NJMVC). Over the course of the pandemic, many of the challenges consumers have at NJMVC such as licensing delays, insufficient customer service, and a lack of consistency across locations have only been exacerbated. Commercial driver's license holders and the businesses that rely on their expertise share in these frustrations. Unfortunately, in a business capacity, these frustrations come at the expense of productivity and efficiency not only for businesses, but also present supply chain challenges for consumers who rely on the goods and services that are only made possible due to a robust CDL workforce. Additionally, employees that rely on the ability to access public transportation to get to work and families that rely on buses to get their children to school greatly suffer from the current lack of qualified CDL drivers.

As associations whose member businesses in the logistics and transportation industries continue to face challenges securing a qualified workforce and operating at full efficiency, we write to you to ask for targeted assistance in critical areas at the NJMVC to streamline processes, create efficiencies and explore creative opportunities to better serve these vital industries and the consumers and passengers that rely on them.

- **Conduct titling, registration and licensing at all NJMVC facilities:** It is long past time for all NJMVC locations to once again process all services at all NJMVC facilities across the state.
- **Enhance customer service experiences:** When returning phone calls NJMVC staff must be instructed to leave their name and contact information in order to allow individuals to properly get in contact with NJMVC regarding ongoing issues. NJMVC should be required to respond to customer inquiries within one business day, if simply to acknowledge receipt. This will provide transparency to applicants as they navigate licensure processes.
- **Expand regional access to International Registration Plan transactions:** Commercial vehicles over 26,000 pounds that cross state lines must register in the International Registration Plan (IRP). IRP transactions are conducted through Trenton, although renewals can be done online. In order to better facilitate the logistics industry, we request that three additional locations be established to process IRP transactions more efficiently. Locations should be opened at NJMVC site in the northern part of the state in Randolph, in the northeastern part of the state in Jersey City, Newark or Elizabeth and in the South in Vineland to properly accommodate the robust and ever-increasing logistics needs of our state.
- **Continue appointment-based system for commercial vehicles and commercial drivers:** The current system of appointments adopted during the pandemic to transact necessary in person business is working well. We encourage MVC to continue this practice to provide convenience for consumers. While online appointments remain extremely beneficial, we must acknowledge that at times this necessitates individuals having to travel to NJMVC facilities far from where they live or work in order to receive specific services.

If all NJMVC facilities can again transact all NJMVC business (See bullet 1), this concern can be easily mitigated.

- **Create consistency in CDL road test administration:** NJMVC must ensure uniformity among those administering the CDL road test. This is necessary to properly prepare prospective drivers for their examinations and get license holders behind the wheel as quickly as possible. The quote below from a logistics business employee illustrates how problematic lack of uniform testing can be in deterring the expansion of a strong CDL workforce. It sums the issue up perfectly. *“Trying to get my mechanics and service personnel to pass the driving tests is terribly frustrating. When taking your tests, it is almost impossible to get past the pre-trip. You take your first test and fail it because the inspector didn’t like the format you used. You go back for the retest and do it the way the first inspector wanted it and the second inspector prefers the way you did it the first time. There is no consistency between inspectors and the most alarming thing to me is the fact that the inspectors have no driving credentials themselves.”* NJMVC must ensure that all instructors are properly trained on the latest vehicle technology and accept the same terminology and methods from aspiring drivers taking their exams.
- **Invest in IT system upgrades:** In November 2021 the entire NJMVC computer system went down. According to NJMVC Chief Administrator Fulton it’s the first time in “years” an outage such as this occurred. We urge the state to utilize federal Covid-19 relief funding to invest in necessary upgrades to NJMVC’s information technology infrastructure so the agency can effectively meet the needs of New Jerseyans that rely on them.
- **Allow NJMVC representatives to conduct road tests on site at private training facilities:** Aspiring licensees often face delays in being able to take their road tests. Many large trucking and bus companies across the state have training facilities that prepare future drivers to take their road tests. If NJMVC created a pilot program to conduct onsite road tests at these training facilities, they could streamline the testing process for large numbers of drivers and bring NJMVC services directly to the consumers and business communities that need them.
- **Address delays in CDL written examinations and endorsement examinations:** Any delays in the examination and testing process for aspiring CDL holders creates a significant backlog for the business community that so desperately needs their expertise. NJMVC can assist by offering exams more frequently across the state.

The challenges we seek to address have spanned across decades and many administrations. We have a unique opportunity post-pandemic to conduct a meaningful recalibration of state government, including the NJ Motor Vehicle Commission, for the betterment of all New Jerseyans including our state’s business community, school children and those relying on public transportation. Thank you for taking our concerns and proposed solutions into consideration. We respectfully request a meeting to discuss these ideas on how we can support the transportation and logistics industries and our overall economy. Please contact Chrissy Buteas, NJBIA Chief Government Affairs Officer, at cbuteas@njbias.org to discuss.

Sincerely,

Chrissy Buteas, Chief Government Affairs Officer, New Jersey Business and Industry Association

Patricia Cowley, Executive Director, Greater New Jersey Motorcoach Association

Daniel Rodriguez, Bus Association of New Jersey, Coach USA

Gail Toth, Executive Director, New Jersey Motor Truck Association

Chloe Williams, President, New Jersey School Bus Contractors Association

cc. Senator Patrick Diegnan, Chairman, Senate Transportation Committee

Assemblyman Daniel Benson, Chairman, Assembly Transportation and Independent Authorities Committee

George Helmy, Chief of Staff, Governor Phil Murphy

Senate President Scutari

Assembly Speaker Coughlin

Senate Minority Leader Oroho

Assembly Minority Leader DiMaio