



Maryland Motor Truck Association

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HEARING DATE: February 22, 2023

BILL NO/TITLE: **Senate Bill 709 – Motor Vehicles - Commercial Driver's Licenses and Instructional Permits - Revisions**

COMMITTEE: Senate Judicial Proceedings

POSITION: **Support**

Maryland Motor Truck Association offers its wholehearted support for SB709, which would:

1. Extend the period for a Commercial Learner's Permit (CLP) to obtain the skills necessary to safely operate a large commercial motor vehicle by increasing the expiration date of the permit from 180 days to one year.
2. Remove duplicative state vision screening procedures for Commercial Drivers License (CDL) holders who have a valid medical exam that is already required under federal law.

In February 2022 the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) launched a new entry-level driver training program for CDL students. The program is designed to enhance safety by requiring that prospective CDL drivers be trained by a qualified training provider on a national registry, and by setting consistent baseline training skills that students must be proficient in before taking a CDL test.

Currently in Maryland, a CLP is only valid for 180 days before expiration. However, statistics show that the new training requirements are resulting in many students needing additional practice time to obtain the necessary skills to obtain a CDL. Extending the term of the CLP to one year, which was authorized by FMCSA in 2019, will enhance safety by giving students additional time behind the wheel to ensure they are qualified to safely operate a large commercial truck.

In addition to the extension of the CLP duration, SB709 would also allow the Motor Vehicle Administration to accept a U.S.DOT-mandated medical exam as proof of vision qualification for CDL license renewal. Federal law requires this exam, which includes a vision screening, at least every 2 years. Maryland only requires a vision exam every 8 years. This legislation will streamline the renewal process by avoiding a duplicative administrative procedure for current CDL drivers that are delivering the state's goods.

For the reasons noted above, MMTA urges the committee to adopt these common-sense measures by giving SB709 a favorable report.

About Maryland Motor Truck Association: Maryland Motor Truck Association is a non-profit trade association representing the trucking industry since 1935. In service to its 1,000 members, MMTA is committed to support, advocate and educate for a safe, efficient and profitable trucking industry in Maryland.

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