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February 24, 2026

**RE: Support HB480 – Transportation Network Companies – Deactivation of Drivers**

Chair Korman and members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee:

Empower offers its support to HB480 – legislation aimed at protecting Maryland’s hard-working drivers. Empower supports the goals of HB480 to provide deactivation protections for drivers who work for Transportation Network Companies (“TNCs”) given the control TNCs have over them.

By way of background, Empower is a software company that helps drivers who want to work for themselves, instead of TNCs. With Empower, drivers are neither employees nor contractors; they’re customers. Drivers set their own rates, get 100% of the fare, and pay the company a subscription fee in exchange for software and support services that help them run their own businesses. Drivers using Empower’s software are making thousands of dollars more per month working for themselves than they make working for TNCs, which pay them only about 50% of what TNCs charge riders. Drivers are able to charge riders less and still make considerably more money because they get 100% of the fare.

While the legislation – as drafted – modifies the definition of a TNC, a Transportation Network Operator, Partner and Driver, we appreciate the bill sponsor’s willingness to offer amendments to clarify the bill does not transform Maryland’s independent drivers using Empower’s software into Transportation Network Operators.

Therefore, we respectfully request a favorable report on the bill along with the adoption of the bill sponsor’s clarifying amendments.