

Truck Driver Labor Shortage

Summary of the Issue

Nationally, economic growth is expected to require a 2.2 percent annual increase in the number of commercial truck drivers. The nation currently has a significant truck driver shortage and the trend is expected to worsen due to the aging of the workforce, attrition, competition from other jobs that require less travel, federal security regulations, and insurance requirements.

In 2004, a Hampton Roads Maritime Association Workforce Survey reported interim data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics showing that the driver workforce in Hampton Roads grew by 10.4 percent from 2000 to 2003, double the national growth rate for the same period. At the same time, however, the container volume handled at the Port of Virginia grew 23 percent. (Truck drivers from outside the Hampton Roads region are responding to the increased demand at the Port of Virginia and some of the cargo leaves the port by another mode.) The ability of the intermodal trucking industry to accommodate the growth at the Port of Virginia is becoming increasingly difficult, threatening the success of port operations.

Virginia Freight Advisory Committee (VFAC) Recommendations

1. *Raise awareness of the value of the trucking industry to the Commonwealth's transportation decision makers.* This effort will be led by the Virginia Maritime Association (VMA) and Virginia Trucking Association (VTA).
2. *Increase awareness in the education sector of training and workforce development needs within the transportation industry.* This effort will be led by VMA and the Virginia Community College System (VCCS).
3. *Develop literature that articulates the benefit of the trucking industry to the Commonwealth.* This effort will be led by VTA and VMA.
4. *Encourage insurance providers to partner with their trucking company clients to develop programs that would lower costs and allow new drivers to start their careers by reducing the 2-year experience requirement.* This effort will be led by individual insurance carriers and trucking companies.
5. *Take steps to expand capacity within the VCCS to educate more commercial drivers.* This effort will be led by VCCS and the trucking industry.
6. *Develop a training, testing and qualification procedure so that high school graduates can train for a commercial drivers license (CDL) immediately.* This effort will be led by VCCS, the insurance industry, and trucking companies.

7. *Continue to address business skills through owner operator training initiatives that include a start up course for owner operators through the Small Business Development Center (SBDC); develop a “Community Express” loan program in economically undeveloped areas; increase truck ownership among minority populations; and, establish a partnership with the Center for Community Development to package curriculum, and loan programs as an entry point for new owner operators. This effort will be led by VMA.*
8. *Continue the truck driver recruiting program along the US 58 corridor in Southside Virginia which was initiated with a Tobacco Commission grant. This effort will be led by VMA.*
9. *Continue providing the Virginia Employment Commission (VEC) with documentation on skill requirements for CDL and truck driving careers. This effort will be led by VMA.*

VTrans Technical Committee Recommendation

Accept the VFAC recommendations and provide support as needed.

These recommendations are not within the purview of state agencies to address.