



August 23, 2021

Honorable Gina Raimondo
Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20230

It has been brought to my attention that a Department of Commerce's advisory group, the International Trade Administration's Advisory Committee on Supply Chain Competitiveness, has made the recommendation for federal officials to lead a widespread effort to address the nationwide truck driver shortage as it has reached an all-time high.

I want to bring to your attention that the intercity motorcoach industry – a major cog in the passenger transportation and tourism supply chain – and school bus companies around the country are also suffering from a severe driver shortage that is unlike anything we have ever seen before. We are hearing from motorcoach and school bus companies daily that because of the lack of drivers they are not able to operate buses or run tours. The motorcoach industry has been devastated by COVID-19. In 2020, the industry operated at less than 20 percent of its 2019 levels and now in 2021, the industry is operating at less than 50 percent of 2019 levels. The motorcoach industry carried as many as 600 million passengers prior to the pandemic. These passengers took buses to work, to school, on school trips, to visit family and friends, to see the National Parks and to see every corner of America. In addition to the \$15.5 billion generated by bus companies, these companies add over \$200 billion to the travel economy directly and indirectly. In addition, buses are essential when it comes to moving citizens out of harm's way during natural disasters like fires and hurricanes, and to move our military and national guard personnel for deployments and training.

If the Federal Government is considering trying to find ways to grow the driver pool for truck drivers, they should be doing the same for motorcoach and school bus transportation as well.

During this time when we are already reeling from the effects of the COVID pandemic on our industry, adding a driver shortage is hampering our efforts to get back on the road to recovery. It also hampers the recovery of the travel and tourism industry who rely on motorcoaches to bring them customers, from hotels, theaters, destinations, restaurants and many others.

ABA has already created an industry wide driver recruitment and retention campaign called Driving Force (buses.org/drivingforce). Having the Federal Government assist in the promotion of our industry as a viable career option and helping with marketing the industry would be a tremendous help not only to our businesses who have to turn down jobs but the many others who rely on us.

The motorcoach industry stands ready to assist you however we can help and wants to be included in future efforts to grow the motorcoach driver pool.

Regards,

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Cc: Honorable Pete Buttigieg, Department of Transportation
Administrator Meera Joshi, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration
Richard Boll, Department of Commerce