

McKedra Clements  
Bradford

February 25, 2021  
McKedra Clements Testimony on LD 252

Senator Diamond, Representative Martin, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation, my name is McKedra Clements and I live in Bradford. I'm a member of the Maine Service Employees Association, Local 1989, and I'm here today, on my own personal time, to speak in support of LD 252, An Act To Expand Training Opportunities for Department of Transportation Workers, sponsored by Representative Mark Bryant.

There is definitely a need to expand training opportunities within the Department of Transportation. I currently work as a Transportation Worker 2 out of the Bangor camp. I came to the Department as a new hire without much experience in this line of work, so I've gotten quite a bit of training since my first days at DOT. I earned my Class A license while working for the Department; it was the only thing I needed to advance. Working for the DOT involves much more than driving plows or large trucks; there are a lot of different types of equipment that we operate regularly at DOT and that new hires need to be trained on.

Unfortunately, access to Driver Trainers has been a challenge during my time at the DOT. As far as I know, there is only one Driver Trainer in my region, so getting time with them is very difficult. Much of my training came from my coworkers, who often did the training as part of their jobs as Transportation Worker 2's and Transportation Worker 3's. I know of DOT workers who got their Class B licenses without ever meeting with a Driver Trainer – instead, it was their coworkers who taught them and helped them get licensed.

I'm one of the younger workers at my camp and within the DOT, but as you have heard in testimonies before mine, Maine's population is aging and many of our most experienced workers at DOT are approaching retirement age. So not only do we need more Driver Trainers to fill existing gaps in training opportunities, but we will need even more of them in the future to keep up with the Department's need to hire and train new workers to fill the future vacancies. The equipment we use is expensive and can be dangerous; proper training is critical for both safety and productivity. We need more Driver Trainers to ensure that we can keep up with the demand for training at DOT.

Thank you for your time and I would be happy to answer any questions you might have.