**Seasonal commercial driver's license (CDL) demand**

Commissioner Petersen,

Thank you for your leadership and ongoing MDA efforts to maintain licensing, inspections and operations of the agriculture sector during COVID-19.  With noticeably earlier planting conditions than last year, farmers and agribusiness are gearing up for the 2020 planting season.  The timing of Governor Walz’s stay-at-home order unintentionally coincides with the hiring of seasonal Class B commercial driver’s licenses (CDL).  The closure of regional Department of Public Safety Driver and Vehicles Services offices does not allow for the issuance of seasonal CDLs.

An informal poll conducted by the Minnesota Grain and Feed Association (MGFA) and Cooperative Network (CN) over the weekend identified demand for at least 350 seasonal CDL licensees.  Your assistance is requested to identify a statewide solution given this level of reliance on seasonal drivers to deliver seed, crop inputs and fertilizer for a successful planting season.  Seasonal CDL demand could start within 7-10 days in southern Minnesota and be needed statewide for up to 60 days.

Through initial conversations with Department of Public Safety leadership, it appears it -*may*- be possible to issue a duplicate seasonal CDL to previously licensed drivers.  This is tremendously helpful and solves part of the hiring problem.  More difficult is the need to license new drivers.  The rationale to license new seasonal CDL applicants includes the existing nationwide driver shortage even potential impact of COVID-19 on existing drivers and future applicants.

Your advice, partnership and consultation with the Minnesota Department of Public Safety and the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) on guidance that allows for an emergency and temporary alternative process in the absence of an operational DVS is desired (see attached).  Please advise how our respective organizations and companies can assist in a solution to meet the imminent demand for seasonal CDLs.

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