

Driver Shortage – Younger Driver Program

2020

TANY Position: The Trucking Association of New York (TANY) supports the implementation of a pilot program to allow drivers between the ages of 18 and 20 to operate a commercial motor vehicle (CMV) within New York state.

Background: The trucking industry continues to struggle with finding qualified, professional drivers. A recent study conducted by the American Trucking Associations (ATA) calculated a shortage of 60,000 drivers nationwide at the end of 2018. The shortage is estimated to reach 174,000 drivers by 2026. The shortage affects all states, including New York, and has been identified as a top issue by New York motor carriers.

Several factors contribute to the shortage – an aging workforce, the fact that a CMV driver between the ages of 18 and 20 can only drive smaller commercial vehicles within New York’s borders, the requirement that a CMV driver must be at least 21 years of age to drive a typical 5-axle tractor-trailer, and the fact that many individuals do not view the trucking industry as a career option. Additionally, insurance companies frequently require a driver to have at least two years of experience as a prerequisite for coverage.

Impact: Trucks are critical to the economy of New York. The inability for trucking companies to hire qualified drivers impacts their ability to service their customers, potentially creating supply shortages and delivery delays. Many motor carriers have indicated they have equipment sitting idle in their yards simply because they can’t find drivers to drive the trucks.

Solution: TANY supports the creation of a program which would allow CMV drivers between the ages of 18 and 20 to operate a 5-axle tractor trailer combination within New York state. The program would include strict oversight, significant training, qualifications and follow-up before being allowed to drive on their own. TANY does not advocate for putting younger drivers behind the wheel with no experience or training.