

Re: City Policies Concerning Sleep Studies and Department of Transportation Certification

To: City Manager Seewood, Mayor Buffaloe, and City Council,

At our last few meetings, the Public Transit Advisory Commission has discussed the topic of sleep apnea, sleep studies, and Department of Transportation certification and re-certification of CDL drivers, including transit operators, after it was brought to our attention as a concern. In discussion with city staff and various members of the public, we learned that the city insurance does not cover the cost of sleep studies that may be required by USDOT in order for some CDL drivers to re-certify, necessitating these drivers to pay for this expensive test out-of-pocket in order to continue their valuable work as city bus operators.

While we appreciate that city staff strive to save our employees money by allowing use of a much cheaper at-home test whenever possible, this test still costs hundreds of dollars. Those drivers who aren't able to utilize the at-home option must pay thousands of dollars out-of-pocket for the full overnight sleep apnea test, with limited locations that provide the test, and very limited time to schedule and complete it (all while being unable to drive while undergoing the process). This all places undue stress on our drivers who are simply trying to continue their employment (many of whom have been employed with the city for a long time), and makes it more difficult for the city to retain employees. Difficulty retaining and recruiting bus drivers has been the major driver of recent drastic cuts to the transit system.

The commission would ask the city to include funding in the FY 26 city budget to cover the cost of sleep apnea testing for our CDL drivers, and/or to re-evaluate the inclusion of sleep studies into the city employee insurance program at the earliest opportunity. The commission understands that this would not be limited to transit operators, and could include hundreds of CDL drivers across the city, but paying even a portion of the cost would have a huge impact to these employees and improve the retention of these hard to fill positions.

Thank you for your attention to this matter,

Public Transit Advisory Commission

Matt Wright, Chair