

Submitted electronically to: rulecomments.dep@maine.gov

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Lynne Cayting, Chief
Mobile Sources Section in the Bureau of Air Quality
Maine Department of Environmental Protection
17 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Rulemaking Comments for Chapter 128, Advanced Clean Trucks Program

Dear Ms. Cayting,

I am writing you today to express concern over Maine adopting the California Advanced Clean Trucks program. My father started Pottle's Transportation back in 1960 and I purchased it from him in 1988. Back then, the operations were small, and while the challenges I faced then seemed endless, they pale in comparison to the difficulties faced today. Despite these headwinds, we built the business into one of the most respected trucking companies in Maine with over 300 employees and owner-operators, 231 trucks and over 800 trailers through hard work and hiring great people.

Since my father started the company, however, things have changed. Some were organic changes like trucking's federal deregulation in the early 1980's, but many of these changes were forced upon us from the state and federal government. While not all of these changes were bad, almost all of them created economic impacts to our operations that necessitated additional investments – investments that sometimes challenged our ability to remain profitable. But we adapted and we overcame, many times in spite of the myriad of new rules and reforms that were introduced and adopted.

The reason I tell you all of this is to give insight as to my reasons for selling my Maine trucking company earlier this year. The operational costs to safely and successfully operate a trucking business have been getting incrementally higher in Maine with freight declines being the direct result of well-intended policies implemented in a vacuum without consideration for the long-term or big picture. Whether it is autonomous trucks, the never-ending challenge of finding safe and qualified workers, or the unbelievable debt commitment that will be necessary to adopt new technology – both clean diesel trucks and ZEV trucks – I knew a company the size of Pottle's could not thrive into the future without a sale to a company with the scale and means to comply and invest in emerging technology requirements. Quite frankly, it is proposals like the one you are considering here that tipped the scale in favor of selling the business since it would further jeopardize future operations given the exponential increase in debt it would create.

While my family and our employees are fortunate to have found a company who shares our views, values, and vision for the future, Bison USA is not a Maine-based company. Adopting the California Advanced Clean Trucks rule will drive more Maine family-based businesses like mine to consider selling because they won't be able to afford the 2-3 times higher cost of electric trucks, plus the investment and associated variables to create a charging infrastructure network. It might not be now, or in 2027 when this rule is set to go into effect if passed, but those conversations will be had around the dinner table for many small carriers who need to purchase a new truck. Do they go with a \$180,000 clean

diesel unit with existing (and predictable) fueling infrastructure? Or will they be forced to consider a \$400,000 electric truck with limited range, a public refueling infrastructure that does not currently exist and then have to invest tens of thousands of dollars to get charging capacity at their home and/or shop? Please put yourself in their position when considering your vote on this proposal – what would you do?

The trucking industry also faces continually escalating insurance costs due to liability increases and the higher value of equipment. To a large degree, insuring a trucking operation is a product of the value of your equipment. And if the cost of ZEV equipment is exponentially higher than its clean diesel equivalent, the cost of insurance to cover this equipment will be proportionally higher as well. I have to believe that repairing a battery electric vehicle involved in an accident will cost much more as well – both because of the higher component costs and the lack of experienced technicians to repair them. And depending upon where the truck is damaged (from road debris or an accident) the cost of the battery might make the damaged vehicle totaled versus repairable.

My last point that I hope you will think about is the impact this would have on manufacturers in Maine. When I owned Pottle's Transportation, I experienced the early market booms and now the busts with a number of Maine mills closing for various economic reasons. Making their transportation costs more expensive will not keep more mills from closing and, in fact, will have the opposite effect. Truck manufacturers will pass the added costs to the dealers, the dealers will pass it on to the truckers and the truckers will pass it on to the shippers (the mills) who will be forced to pass it on to the consumers if they can. If they can't, more will close.

There is a right way and a wrong way to improve the environment. Implementing an increasing percentage of ZEV truck sales before there is an adequate plan to ensure successful implementation seems to me to be the wrong way because it will have countless negative impacts on trucking's efficiency and operations, as well as having economic consequences that will be detrimental to Mainers everywhere.

Please vote against adopting the Chapter 128, Advanced Clean Trucks Program rules. It might make sense in the future, but it is not the right thing to do now.

Sincerely,

Barry Pottle
154 Klatte Rd
Hermon, ME 04401