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## **News Alert - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **CHITTENDEN COUNTY TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY REMAINS READY TO RETURN TO NEGOTIATIONS WITH UNION**

***- CCTA OFFERS TO CLARIFY LANGUAGE IN TENTATIVE AGREEMENT -***

April 8, 2011 – The Chittenden County Transportation Authority (CCTA) delivered a letter yesterday to Duane Messier, Business Agent for Teamsters Local 597 and the entire Union Negotiating Team. The letter to Mr. Messier is attached for your review.

As the Union prepares to vote on Sunday, CCTA believes this is a critical juncture for CCTA, its drivers and the general public. CCTA is committed to continued negotiations until a finalized agreement is reached.

For more information on CCTA negotiations with the Union, please visit [cctaride.org/news/labor.html](http://cctaride.org/news/labor.html).

*The mission of CCTA is to operate safe, convenient, accessible, innovative and sustainable public transportation services in the Chittenden County region that reduce congestion and pollution, encourage transit oriented development and enhance the quality of life for all.*

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## *Getting you where you need to go!*

April 7, 2011

Duane Messier  
Business Agent  
Teamsters Local No. 597

Dear Duane:

As your Sunday meeting approaches, there is no question but that this is an absolutely critical juncture for CCTA, its drivers and the general public. In connection with your discussion of the "Second Tentative Agreement", we think it imperative that we respond to several concerns that have been publicly expressed. We believe it is necessary to do this in order to clarify our position. We do believe that in certain respects, we can clarify and if necessary or desirable "tweak" the settlement language without substantially compromising either of our positions or the substance of the Second TA.

Thus, we would ask you to consider the following:

1. Concern has been expressed that the Agency intends to limit full time drivers to 37.5 hours per week. This has never been our intent. The Second TA gives every driver the option of a 40 hour work week. If a driver were able to prove an inability to supplement a bid between 37.5 and 40 hours to achieve a full 40 hours due to a lack of available work, the Agency is prepared to guarantee 40 hours of pay.
2. With respect to workforce reductions, we are entirely willing to state that no full time driver will be laid off in favor of retaining a part time driver. To the extent necessary, we are willing to absolutely clarify that part time drivers will be laid off before any full time drivers and, if layoffs beyond part timers is necessary, seniority will be the controlling factor. We want you to understand, however, that following this protocol may limit our ability to ensure that each full time driver is able to work a weekly schedule that guarantees two consecutive days off and that the reduction of spread times may not be as significant as hoped.
3. Our willingness to allow full time drivers with more than 10 years of experience to convert to part time status, and not be included among the 13 authorized part time drivers, was in response to what we understood to be the Union's desire. If in point of fact the Union would prefer to have a maximum of 13 part time drivers, and not permit full timer migration in addition to the 13, we would accept this as the standard and tweak the language to achieve this.

We would also like to talk to you about the events of next week. While we hope the voting results will be positive, the clarifications listed above apply in either case. In the event of a negative vote, we trust you agree that we should do everything possible to secure an



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agreement before a strike becomes possible on April 14. To this end, we think it is imperative that we meet with the Federal Mediator before April 14 if at all possible. Commissioner Temple told Joe McNeil today that she is available and would quite prefer to do this on the 12<sup>th</sup> (but not the 13<sup>th</sup>), and to start as early as possible that day. We strongly concur. While I am told that you plan to be out of State at a conference Monday-Wednesday, I would most sincerely ask you to modify your plans so that we can meet on Tuesday if necessary. I assure you that our bargaining team will be available. If for any reason the Federal Government shuts down and Commissioner Temple is not available to mediate, we would suggest a mediation session with Ira Lobel or another mutually acceptable experienced mediator, also on Tuesday. If under a worst case scenario no meeting is possible until Thursday, we would certainly hope and expect that no strike would be commenced unless and until the mediation concludes without success. Would you kindly confirm this commitment in writing.

In summary, we both have a tremendous amount at stake. The public deserves nothing short of our very best effort to avoid the curtailment of critical public services. Let us please make sure we "get to yes", keep our buses in service and the public appropriately served.

Very truly yours,

*Meredith Birkett*

Meredith Birkett  
Interim General Manager

Cc: Bargaining Committee Members  
Nathan Bergeron  
Kim Tanner  
Michael Walker  
Chapin Spenser, CCTA Board Chair  
Joseph E. McNeil, CCTA Lead Negotiator

