



AMALGAMATED TRANSIT UNION

Division 757

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March 16, 2020

Governor Kate Brown
Office of the Governor
900 Court Street NE, Suite 254
Salem, OR 97301-4047

RE: Paid Sick Leave for School Bus Operators

Dear Governor Brown,

I am writing to you on behalf of Amalgamated Transit Union, Local 757, the union representing school bus operators and transit workers throughout the state. I am reaching out to you in response to the two-week statewide school closure order and the effect it has on our school bus operators.

I am writing to urge you to require school districts to continue to pay their bus operators by placing them on emergency paid sick leave – as opposed to unpaid sick leave. Otherwise, the two-week school closure will have a detrimental effect on our school bus operators and their families. For one, most of our operators will exhaust their unpaid sick leave before the end of the school closure order is lifted. Secondly, most of our operators, who are already some of the lowest paid workers, cannot afford to be placed on unpaid sick leave. As a result, we will lose a significant amount of our operators to other jobs, simply because they cannot afford to forego a paycheck.

Therefore, in an effort to help us retain our bus operators and to help them out in this moment of crisis, we ask that you require school districts to continue to pay school bus operators. We understand that this is something the Seattle School District in Seattle, WA is doing at this time during their district-wide school closures.

Lastly, of the same concern, I also urge your office to require transportation districts like TriMet and others throughout the state, to provide an additional allowance of emergency paid sick leave to our transit workers affected by the COVID-19. Otherwise, this will lead to the same detrimental effects on our transit workers, who run the risk exhausting their paid and unpaid sick leave and would face disciplinary action – up to termination.

Sincerely,

Jonathan J. Hunt
Vice President-Assistant Business Representative