



## Ongoing Driver Shortage Forcing Temporary Suspension of Additional Services

**\*\*\* FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE \*\*\***

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**DOVER, NH** – COAST continues to struggle to find qualified CDL bus operators to drive their local public transit routes. The lack of qualified drivers has, regrettably, reached a point where the public transit system must temporarily adjust parts of some bus schedules further.

After having to suspend a small number of services starting in mid-June, the non-profit public transit system serving the Greater Seacoast region is having to make additional, deeper service suspensions because in addition to already being short staffed, multiple staff who were available for the summer are soon returning to school, or school-based employment.

Starting wages for CDL Bus Drivers at COAST have been raised twice this year, now at \$21.25 per hour. After a CDL Bus Driver completes their first year at COAST, the wage rate currently increases by an average of 8.3 percent per year through their fourth anniversary. COAST's wage scale is also increased annually, or more frequently when necessary, to account for market conditions and inflation. The organization regularly has overtime opportunities which result in time and a half for all hours worked over 40 in a week. COAST also offers a benefits package including medical, dental, disability, life, generous paid time off, SIMPLE IRA with employer match, and many others.

Rad Nichols, COAST Executive Director stated, "We are a mission driven public transit system, offering good career-oriented jobs that positively impact the communities we operate in. When you leave work for the day here at COAST, you know you made a real difference in people's lives."

COAST provides a comprehensive paid training program that allows operators to be fully prepared prior to driving routes on their own. Unfortunately, COAST cannot train drivers to get their commercial driver's license, due to liability insurance restrictions. However, COAST can help CDL drivers earn their passenger endorsement, if needed.

### **Additional Service Suspensions**

Starting on Saturday, August 28, and continuing until COAST reaches adequate staffing levels, services on the following bus routes will be affected:

- Route 12
- Route 13
- Route 14
- Route 33

- Route 40
- Route 43

For more information on the specific runs being suspended on each of the affected routes, please visit [www.coastbus.org/upcomingservicechanges](http://www.coastbus.org/upcomingservicechanges).

Nichols confirmed, “the sole reason COAST is suspending these services is due to the shortage of CDL drivers to operate our scheduled routes. Unfortunately, these additional suspensions represent a more sizeable reduction in the services we offer. Our goal is to get back to full operations as soon as possible.”

Being a public transit bus driver can be an incredibly rewarding career, where every day you help your many passengers safely get to work or school and back, go to doctor appointments, make trips to the grocery store or local retailers, meet up with friends for a day or an evening out, or otherwise go about their daily lives. COAST buses are “rolling neighborhoods” that represent each of the 13 communities in which they operate. Friendships are formed, life stories and struggles are shared, and successes are celebrated. COAST bus drivers get to experience all that first-hand.

If you have a commercial driver’s license and are looking for a change and a great work environment, please visit [www.coastbus.org/careers](http://www.coastbus.org/careers).

**The Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation (COAST)** has provided public transit service to the Seacoast New Hampshire region since 1982. COAST is a public, non-profit transit system that relies primarily on federal and local government support to operate. COAST is governed by a board of directors representing the communities served, two regional planning commissions, and many local and state agencies. COAST is an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer.

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