

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

Office of Governmental Affairs

770 L Street, Suite 1230
Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 327-3277

August 13, 2009

The Honorable Christine Kehoe, Chair
Senate Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 5050
Sacramento, CA 95814**RE: AB 636 (Jones) – As Amended July 16, 2009 – Support**
Status: Senate Appropriations Committee Hearing – August 17, 2009

Dear Senator Kehoe:

The California Public Utilities Commission (Commission) voted unanimously to support AB 636. The revocation of a carrier's operating authority for knowingly employing an unqualified driver might appear as overly harsh for a first-time offender. However, the tragic Colusa bus accident demonstrates that additional safeguards need to be in place to prevent unqualified drivers from operating buses. This bill would provide significant sanctions for charter-party carriers and their drivers who jeopardize public safety.

The Commission supports the direction of this bill. However, we have some technical concerns pertaining to the suspension provisions and would like to suggest some amendments for your committee's consideration. The suspension provisions in this bill should be limited to those related to public safety issues under Public Utilities Code Section 5378.5, since many suspensions are not related to safety and may just involve paperwork, such as delinquent payment of fees.

Please see the attached analysis for a more detailed explanation of the Commission's position.

If you have any questions or wish to discuss this matter further, please do not hesitate to call me at (916) 327-7788.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michael Poë".

MICHAEL POE
Legislative Liaison

Attachment

cc: The Honorable Dave Jones, Member, California State Assembly
Members, Senate Appropriations Committee
Mark McKenzie, Senate Appropriations Committee
Rocel Bettencourt, Senate Republican Caucus/Fiscal Policy
Michael Webb, Deputy Legislative Secretary, Office of Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger