Agenda Item 3b

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Memorandum

TO: Legislation Committee DATE: April 3, 2015

FR: Executive Director W. I. 1131

RE: SB 344 (Monning): Commercial Vehicle Driver Training Requirement

Background

SB 344 would help improve the safety of Bay Area roadways by requiring commercial driver training for a person to receive a commercial driver's license. Current law requires that a driver pass a written and a driving test, but does not require any classroom or behind-the-wheel training, nor regulate courses offered by private training schools — which some dub "diploma mills" for their "teaching to the test" approach — if those schools charge less than $2,500 in fees. SB 344 would close this loophole and require DMV to set minimum standards for commercial driving schools, similar to the standards DMV uses to approve employer-based commercial driving training programs.

Senator Bill Monning (Santa Clara and Santa Cruz Counties) requested MTC's support for this legislation which he introduced in response to a recent fatal accident on Highway 17 last July. The truck driver's lack of experience was identified as a major factor in the crash. The steady rise in truck traffic carrying goods within and beyond our region poses a growing safety risk to the traveling public. The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration has initiated a negotiated rulemaking to set minimum standards for entry-level commercial drivers but the timing of those regulations is uncertain.

Recommendation: Support

Discussion
By ensuring the adequacy of commercial driver training programs and setting a minimum requirement for training, SB 344 aims to reduce the risk of tragic and fatal commercial vehicle accidents. To help improve the safety of Bay Area roadways, staff recommends a support position on SB 344.

Known Positions

Support
California Trucking Association
County of Santa Cruz
City of Capitola
City of Scotts Valley

Oppose
None on file

Steve Heminger

SH: RL
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