

[City Letterhead]

Dr. Ron DiPillo  
Executive Director of Career and Technical Education  
Suncoast Technical College  
4445 Career Lane  
North Port, FL 34289

March xx, 2018

The City of North Port would like to extend this letter of support for Suncoast Technical College's Florida Job Growth Grant proposal to fund a portion of the Commercial Vehicle Driving program at the new North Port campus. We understand that the program will educate and train students to drive Class A vehicles and prepare them to pass the Commercial Driver's license exam. The program is an area of need for the city and the surrounding areas according to the Target Region Demand Occupations List.

The projected outcome of 250 students over the next five years is of great interest to the City as it will help meet the estimated local truck driving employment demands during that time. On a national scale, the American Trucking Association reported that, "driver shortfall is expected to rise by the end of 2017 to the highest level on record as freight volumes recover and the industry transitions to the use of electronic logging devices to record driver hours-of-service... with the 2017 shortage estimated at 50,000 ... and could swell to over 174,000 by 2026 if current trends hold." As the North Port metro area continues to grow, and the industrial sectors of warehousing and logistics persist as economic drivers for the region and the nation, we feel that the 250 number may prove to be conservative. For example, according to a Brookings Institute Analysis of Bureau of Labor Statistics data in 2016, the Orlando metro area created a net increase of 6,475 jobs in the years 2010 to 2016 in the "warehousing, electronic shopping, and retail" representing a net increase of 21.6% in this time period. Whatever the final outcome is, we feel confident that it will be very positive overall.

Our support extends to the projected earnings for this occupation. The average wage for a truck driver holding a Class A driver's license is \$50,987 and the potential wages earned by the graduates may exceed \$12 million dollars overall. We appreciate and highlight your school's accreditation standards which places priority on student job placement, with a 90% placement average. National safety regulations also bode well for North Port. The current mandate is for truck drivers to operate within a 14-hour workday, which positions North Port very well within the state's flow of commerce because many drivers, particularly the independent business owners, prefer to operate from their home base within this 14-hour mandate.

Given the City's phenomenal population growth, its young demographics, and its central location to the state's growing markets, your proposed program will support the City of North Port's economic develop goals of attracting larger companies and businesses that will require transportation and distribution services. These jobs not only support the logistics and warehousing sectors, but also attracts the higher value-adding sectors of light and specialty manufacturing. We wish you great success in this grant application to the state's Job Growth Program; please do not hesitate to let us know if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

Mayor Vanessa Carusone