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Dear PAOLMA Members,

HAPPY NEW YEAR to you and your loved ones. We at the Cameron Companies wish you all the best for a prosperous, successful, healthy and safe 2024!!!

Calendar Year 2023 was a turning point year for PAOLMA related to the educational efforts made to inform elected officials across Pennsylvania about the important role on-line messengers play in our communities and for all Pennsylvania consumers. PAOLMA made great progress in developing meaningful relationships with the new administration of Governor Josh Shapiro and among 253 Senate and House members, 53 of whom were newly inducted freshmen members last January. New members of both the Senate and House Transportation Committees (new Committee Chairmen, too) were also educated and introduced to the on-line messenger profession.

The Capitol was a different place in 2023 than ever before with a new Governor, a slim 102 (D)-101(R) majority/minority in the House membership (governed for the first time in a decade by new Democrat leaders) and a Republican-controlled Senate which assured divided government inside the building.

PAOLMA set an early goal to re-establish a meaningful working relationship with PennDOT at all levels of the department. Through countless hours of meetings, calls, and conversations, PAOLMA Board members made a commitment to this goal. As a result of past relationships built by your association and the Board, PAOLMA was able to educate legislators as to the need for a robust partnership between on-line messengers and PennDOT. As a former legislator himself, PennDOT Secretary Mike Carroll was enthusiastic and eagerly accepted the opportunity to do more with PAOLMA and all on-line messengers. Secretary Carroll's leadership led to a top-down re-introduction of PennDOT staff to PAOLMA and allowed your Board to thoroughly educate high level PennDOT/Shapiro appointed managers and the hard working staff that provide Driver and Vehicle Services. Since January 2023 PAOLMA has continued to build credibility as a resource to PennDOT and discussions (at the behest of Secretary Carroll) are now scheduled regularly to solve challenges faced by PAOLMA members on a myriad of issues. The PennDOT staff has been accessible and willing to address the most detailed and nuanced challenges faced by on-line messengers. No operational issue is too small for consideration. 2023 truly was a year of accomplishment in meeting the important goal of enhancing the PennDOT-PAOLMA working relationship!

In the General Assembly new leaders, members and staff worked diligently to learn, understand and become accustomed to their new roles and responsibilities. PAOLMA Board members took the time to meet and educate with Members and legislative staffers, in particular those serving on or staffing the important Senate and House Transportation committees. Once legislative activity commenced in early April 2023 PAOLMA remained engaged with Senator Marty Flynn (D-Scranton), Minority Chairman of the Senate Transportation Committee, on an 8-bill package of transportation legislation that included digital driver's licenses, driver education changes, EV registrations and others. As a resource, PAOLMA did valuable work with the Senator, his colleagues, and staff to assure the full impact of these bills on the Association's members is understood and does not cause harm or damage to the profession. Those discussions will continue in 2024 as the bill package is formally introduced in the Senate.

PAOLMA has been educating many members about a role that on-line messengers can play in the continued effort to find a means to incorporate electric vehicles into the Department's regulatory environment. The level and how EV's will be registered and taxed is an on-going debate in the General Assembly and fortunately PAOLMA is in the conversation.

As transportation funding levels for both highways and bridges, and mass transit, continue to become a pressure point on the Governor and legislature 2024 could be the year when an omnibus transportation bill is considered. This could look much like Act 89 of 2013 in that it would be a comprehensive bill containing many, many component pieces to address issues in transportation and infrastructure across a wide range of topics. Certainly, subjects and issues impacting on-line messengers might be part of the debate and possibly be contained in the final legislation considered by the General Assembly. This is a matter in which we will always monitor and engage in 2024.

As we open 2024 we have a Governor who is nationally recognized for his management of the collapse of I-95 in Philadelphia (an achievement no less accomplished by the good work of PennDOT Secretary Carroll), a State House that has a 101 (D)- 101 (R) membership (with one vacant House seat in Bucks County) and a Republican-controlled Senate concerned about maintaining its majority (currently 28-22). It is, MOST IMPORTANTLY, an Election Year…for every major elected office including President, Vice-President, Bob Casey's US Senate seat, every sitting member of the US House of Representatives, the PA Attorney General, Treasurer, and Auditor General, 25 of the sitting 50 members of the PA Senate, and all of the 203 members of the PA House of Representatives. For all involved, getting elected or re-elected will be of highest priority in 2024.

For PAOLMA the goals include refining and enhancing the relationship between the Association and PennDOT. Legislatively the goal will be to monitor intentions and activity, increase and enhance exposure to members of the General Assembly, and provide credible information and education to all involved with the issues that matter to on-line messengers.

As we stated at the Association's October Convention, we will begin implementing an outreach program early this year that allows us to contact, meet with and educate your local legislators in the Senate and House in their districts where you operate. You should expect to hear from us throughout the year as we engage this process. We begin these contacts through each of you based on the seniority and authority of the legislative members. If your legislator chairs the Transportation Committee or sits thereon you can expect to be engaged with that person with our assistance. As the generation of elected officials changes we will need to do more to introduce on-line messengers to the new decisionmakers. This outreach program, which we hope to grow, evolve, and operate into a "regular course of business", will assure that when the time comes and transportation legislation is getting in-depth consideration, PAOLMA and all on-line messengers will be at the forefront as the relied-upon resource for the Shapiro Administration, the Department and the entire General Assembly in making good policy and law for the motoring public in the Commonwealth.

Wishing you the best, again, for a HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!