



Maura Healey, Governor
Kimberley Driscoll, Lieutenant Governor
Gina Fiandaca, Secretary & CEO
Meredith Slesinger, MassDOT Rail & Transit Administrator



March 23, 2023

RE: DATTCO Cancellation of Service

Dear Members of the New Bedford, Taunton and Fairhaven Delegations:

On behalf of Massachusetts Department of Transportation and Secretary Gina Fiandaca, I am writing to you in response to concerns on the notification of the private bus company DATTCO and their decision to terminate service on their South Coast—Boston commuter bus service.

We share your concerns regarding the abrupt decision to discontinue service and are actively engaging with DATTCO and internal stakeholders to address this potential gap in transportation service until South Coast Rail begins operations.

Since 2013, DATTCO has participated in the MassDOT-run BusPlus+ program. As part of this program, private regional bus service providers, such as DATTCO, operate state-owned buses under a Service and Maintenance Agreement whereby operators receive the buses in exchange for a defined "Service Benefit." In this case, as a service benefit, DATTCO operates nine BusPlus+ buses under two separate agreements. Eight of the nine buses operate on the Fairhaven-New Bedford-Taunton-Boston route.

According to DATTCO, over the last few years, they have observed decreased ridership, with a monthly average as low as 30-40 riders per day. Due to this decrease in ridership, we are told DATTCO has experienced a significant deficit, and has decided to cancel this service. We at MassDOT share the concerns expressed by community leaders regarding the effects this will have on our residents. However, as a private operator who participates voluntarily in the BusPlus+ program, MassDOT has limited authority to compel participation or reactivate service.

As we continue to work with DATTCO to find a solution, we will provide your office with updates as this issue progresses. Thank you for your continued partnership, and we look forward to working together to find an equitable resolution for the residents of New Bedford and the surrounding communities. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me directly, or you may contact Alyssa Ring, Assistant Secretary of Legislative Affairs, at Alyssa.Ring@dot.state.ma.us or (617) 366-7072.

Sincerely,

Meredith Slesinger

Meredith Slesinger
Rail and Transit Administrator, MassDOT