

## Letter from a Whitby Bus Driver

### **“I have lost full-time employment (4 hrs pay per week), benefits, vacation, weekends off and the ability to go to work once a day”**

I have driven a transit bus in the Town of Whitby/Durham Region since 2004. I started with Whitby Transit when the service was contracted to Coach Canada. The Region of Durham took control of all the transit system in Durham Region in January 2006 but left the Whitby division contracted to Coach Canada.

I then remained employed by Coach Canada while driving a Durham Region Transit bus. In 2004, I started off working weekends, evenings and split shifts. I did this about 7 years before I was finally able to get weekends off. It then took me another 4 years to finally get away from doing split shifts. The Region of Durham put the contract out to tender for a January 1, 2017 start and PW Transit successfully won the bid. I was taken on by PWT but retained my 12-year seniority so at that time my work schedule remained pretty much the same through the next 7 years. It had taken me 11 years to finally be able to work shifts that were Monday-Friday and generally in the 5am-2pm time frame. This allowed me to have a normal family life.

Now in 2023 the Region decided to bring the Whitby transit service in house. I found I had lost my job, and had to reapply to be hired. When I was hired, it was only as a part-time employee with a June 30, 2023 seniority date. I have now lost 18.5 years of seniority and full-time employment but I am still doing the same job for the Region. I now work less than the 40 hours that I have been accustomed to, I have no benefits, no vacation time and I am back to working weekends, evenings and split shifts again.

I went from working Monday-Friday 5 am to 2 pm to now a shift as follows:

**Monday to Wednesday:**

4:26 am to 8:44 am

Off from 8:44 am to 3:01 pm (with no pay)

3:01 pm to 5:20 pm

Paid - 6.62 hrs per day

and

**Wednesday and Thursday are my days off.**

and

**Saturday and Sunday:**

5:44 am to 2:17 pm

Paid 8.05 hrs per day

Total per week: paid 35.96 hrs

**In this transition I have lost full-time employment (4 hrs pay per week), benefits, vacation, weekends off and the ability to go to work once a day. It also costs me twice as much for getting to and from work because I am going in twice a day and home twice a day. I am now again missing out on time with my family after doing the same job for 19 years. In fact, Monday to Wednesday I am driving the same routes in Whitby that I have driven for my entire career.**

My quality of life has been negatively affected through no fault of my own nor by my own choice. I now find myself in my 50's looking at the possibility of a career change to improve the quality of my life.

I understand we were contracted out, however I have driven Durham Region Transit (DRT) owned buses since they took over in 2006. The routes are timed and scheduled by the Region, I have worn DRT uniforms, I have followed their policies and procedures and I have driven routes that were, and still are, timed and scheduled by the Region. Even the commercial vehicle operator's registration (CVOR) is owned by DRT. The only difference was that my paycheck came from a different source.

**Throughout the 19 years I have paid union dues to Unifor Local 222 expecting that they would help protect my rights. They basically handed my job to the Region and told me that we, in Whitby, don't matter as the contract is over. That may be true, but the work I was doing is still being done and I am even doing some of it myself.**

I've paid dues to Unifor Local 222 for 19 years to protect my job only to have it taken away from me and a carrot dangled in front me to reapply for my job to provide my services to the same company and pay union dues to the same union that failed me in the first place.

Chris Hardy