

STATEMENT OF RESPONSE TO KVCAP DRIVER'S UNION PICKETING
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In early 2019, the KVCAP Augusta-based Drivers filed a petition and held an election to form a union. Ten out of 17 drivers voted in the affirmative, citing low wages and poor working conditions as their basis for joining the union. Therefore, starting in May of 2019, KVCAP has been involved in collective bargaining with the union reps and driver representatives.

In its 54 years of providing high quality services to low income Mainers, KVCAP has prided itself in maintaining competitive wages and benefits (despite restricted and/or limited funding) along with a family friendly work environment. As a private, not for profit corporation, KVCAP operates primarily on Federal and State grants. The majority of revenue is limited to specific program purposes, including Transportation. Over the past five years, due to limitations in funding streams, compliance requirements of funding sources, and the high demand for transportation, KVCAP has continued to provide this service despite losing nearly a million dollars.

Despite these significant losses, KVCAP continued to provide cost of living wage increases in order to bring wages in line with and above the growing minimum wage. (This is in addition to employee annual merit increases based on performance.) In 2017, KVCAP implemented a three phase wage increases with wage scale adjustments occurring in January 2018 and January 2019 along with a third scheduled for January 2020. During this time period, KVCAP Augusta-based drivers received an average of a 24% increase in wages. Additionally, KVCAP offers a robust health insurance plan that is not available on the private market and in which KVCAP pays 90% of the employee cost.

During recent bargaining, union representatives requested that Augusta Drivers receive a wage increase above what is already budgeted for. Any increases would result in more financial loss for a vital community service that is already on a shoe string budget. It is not feasible and could ultimately result in less service to our riders and consumers who greatly need it.

KVCAP has offered to maintain the wage increase that it has already budgeted for, retroactive to January 2020 as well as increase holiday pay and inclement weather pay. We have also conducted a market study that has determined that KVCAP driver wages are competitive with other driver positions in similar programs across the state. KVCAP also offers excellent health insurance, employer paid life insurance, paid time off, holiday pay, employer sponsored retirement plan, etc.

We sincerely hope that we can come to an agreement as soon as possible so that we can refocus our energy and resources on providing the highest quality service possible to our customers.