

**BEFORE THE
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO**

In the Matter of a Request for : Case No. 20-1503-TR-CVF
Approval of the Settlement Between : (21-CR-386768)
Staff and General Freight Experts Inc. :
Pursuant to Rule 4901:2-7-11, Ohio
Administrative Code.

SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

I. INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to Rule 4901:2-7-11 of the Ohio Administrative Code (O.A.C.), General Freight Experts Inc. (hereinafter, "Respondent") and the Staff of the Transportation Department of the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (hereinafter, "Staff") enter into this Settlement Agreement and urge the Commission to adopt the same.

It is understood by the Respondent and the Staff that this Settlement Agreement is not binding upon the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (hereinafter, "Commission"). This agreement however, is based on the Respondent's and the Staff's desire to arrive at a reasonable result considering the law, facts and circumstances. Accordingly, the Respondent and the Staff believe that the Commission should adopt this Settlement Agreement.

This Settlement Agreement is submitted on the condition that the Commission adopts the agreed upon terms. The Parties agree that if the Commission rejects all or any part of this Settlement Agreement or otherwise materially modifies its terms, either Party

shall have the right, within thirty (30) business days of the Commission's order, either to file an application for rehearing or to terminate and withdraw from this agreement by filing a notice with the Commission. If an application for rehearing is filed, and if the Commission does not, on rehearing, accept the Settlement Agreement without material modification, either Party may terminate and withdraw from this Settlement Agreement by filing a notice with the Commission within ten (10) business days of the Commission's order or entry on rehearing. In such an event, a hearing shall go forward, and the Parties shall be afforded the opportunity to present evidence through witnesses, to cross-examine all witnesses, to present rebuttal testimony, and to file briefs on all issues.

II. PROCEDURAL HISTORY

A. On August 11, 2020, a compliance review of Respondent's facility located at 1256 Industrial Parkway North, Suite 2, Brunswick, Ohio, resulted in the discovery of alleged violations of the Commission's rules. The Staff timely notified Respondent pursuant to Rule 4901:2-7-07, O.A.C., that it intended to assess a civil forfeiture against the Respondent for the following violations:

- (1) failing to conduct a pre-employment query in violation of 49 § C.F.R. 382.701(a);
- (2) failing to register in the Clearinghouse in violation of 49 C.F.R. § 382.711(b);
- (3) allowing the driver to drive while disqualified (safety related) in violation of 49 C.F.R. § 383.37(b);

- (4) Operating a vehicle in violation of local/state laws in violation of 49 C.F.R. § 392.2; and
 - (5) Failing to require a driver to prepare a record of duty status in violation of 40 C.F.R. § 395.8(a)(1).
- B. On August 28, 2020, Respondent made a request for a conference with the Staff pursuant to 4901:2-7-10 O.A.C.
- C. On August 29, 2020, Staff sent a timely Notice of Apparent Violation and Intent to Assess Forfeiture (“Notice”) in accordance with Rule 4901:2-7-12, O.A.C. for 21-CR-386768. The Notice assessed Respondent \$27,800.00 for the violations.
- D. A conference between Respondent and Staff was held on September 15, 2020.
- E. The parties have negotiated this Settlement Agreement which the parties believe resolves all the issues raised in the notice of preliminary determination.

III. SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

The parties hereto agree and recommend that the Commission find as follows:

- A. Respondent agrees to violations of 49 C.F.R. § 382.701(a), 382.711(b), 383.37(b), and 392.2, 395.8(a)(1), and recognizes that they may be included in the Respondent’s Safety-Net Record and Respondent’s history of violations insofar as they may be relevant for purposes of determining future penalty actions.

- B. Respondent has provided proof sufficient to Staff that it has a compliance plan in place to correct the violations found in this inspection. Staff therefore agrees to reduce the forfeiture amount from \$27,800.00 to \$18,200.00. Respondent agrees to pay a total civil forfeiture of \$18,200.00 for the violations.
- C. Respondent shall pay the \$18,200.00 civil forfeiture in 12 consecutive monthly installments of \$1,516.67 commencing 30 days after the Commission's order approving this Settlement Agreement. The payments shall be made payable to "Treasurer State of Ohio," and they shall be mailed to PUCO, Attn: CF Processing, 180 E. Broad St., 4th floor, Columbus, OH 43215-3793. The case number (CR21386768) should appear on the face of each check.
- D. This Settlement Agreement shall not become effective until adopted by an Opinion and Order of the Commission. The date of the entry of the Commission order adopting this Settlement Agreement shall be considered the effective date of the Settlement agreement.
- E. This Settlement Agreement is made in settlement of all factual or legal issues in this case. It is not intended to have any effect whatsoever in any other case or proceeding, except as described in Paragraph A.

IV. CONCLUSION

The Signatory parties agree that this Settlement Agreement is in the best interest of all parties, and urge the Commission to adopt the same. The undersigned respectfully request that the Commission issue an entry in accordance with the terms set forth in this Settlement Agreement.

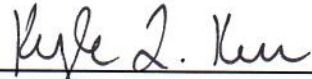
The parties have manifested their consent to the Settlement Agreement by affixing their signatures below on this 9th day of October 2020.

On behalf of General Freight
Experts Inc.

On Behalf of the Staff of the Public
Utilities Commission of Ohio

/s/ 

1256 Industrial Parkway North,
Suite 2, Brunswick, Ohio 44212

/s/ 

Kyle L. Kern
Assistant Attorney General
Public Utilities Section
30 East Broad Street, 16th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

This foregoing document was electronically filed with the Public Utilities

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in

Case No(s). 20-1503-TR-CVF

Summary: Agreement Settlement Agreement electronically filed by Mrs. Kimberly M Naeder
on behalf of PUCO