



33 - 10/21/26

The State of New Hampshire
Department of Transportation



David Rodrigue, P.E.
Commissioner

Susan M. Klasen, P.E.
Assistant Commissioner

Michelle L. Winters
Deputy Commissioner

Her Excellency, Governor Kelly A. Ayotte
and the Honorable Council
State House
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

Bureau of Highway Maintenance
October 1, 2026

Informational Item

The Department of Transportation plans to increase the hourly rental rates for private contracted rental equipment for winter maintenance plowing and spreading of material by 15%. The Department continues to have difficulty competing with adjacent states, municipalities and private companies to attract and employ CDL license holders for highway maintenance positions. This has resulted in a shortage of drivers for state-owned equipment.

The Department has had similar difficulty contracting drivers with rental equipment to supplement the Department's internal staff shortage. Our limited pool of available CDL drivers with plowing experience only serves to heighten the need for recruiting and retaining sufficient contractors and equipment.

In the event that we are unable to attract internal or rental resources to meet current snow removal service levels and expectations, we may need to decrease plowing and road treatment frequency which would result in longer periods of degraded driving conditions and longer durations before highways are fully treated.

Increasing the hourly rental rates will help support the effort to maintain expected service levels.

Funding for the contract agreements is currently available in the following accounting units and is expected to increase costs by approximately \$2-3M/annually. This may result in additional transfers from the Highway and Turnpike Funds during the plowing season depending on the severity of the season. Funding is 100% Highway or Turnpike Funds as noted below.

Highway

04-96-96-960515-2928-Winter Maintenance-022 Rents-Leases other than State Equipment

04-96-96-960515-3007-HWY Maintenance Bureau-022 Rents-Leases other than State Equipment

Turnpikes

04-96-96-961017-7027-Central Maintenance-022 Rents-Leases other than State Equipment

04-96-96-961017-7032-East NH TPK Blue Star-022 Rents-Leases other than State Equipment

04-96-96-961017-7037-East NH TPK Spaulding-022 Rents-Leases other than State Equipment

Explanation

Since its creation, the Department has rented and the Legislature has funded, privately owned equipment to assist with the maintenance of the state's highway system. Over the course of this time there have been numerous versions of administrative rules, all noting (as in the current TRA 102.05(b) (03) that the Department's Bureau of Mechanical Services shall be responsible for "the setting of rental rates and approval of private equipment rental by

this or any other department.” The most current rental rates were published by the Department in 2026, with updates in 2005, 2016, 2019, 2021, and 2023 for operator and plow trucks rates.

The Department relies on contracted rental equipment with operators, to supplement its own internal winter operations workforce in order to treat the state highway system. Currently, rental trucks constitute the majority of equipment that plows the state roadway system. Due to the Department’s ongoing labor shortfalls, a strong reliance on contracted rental equipment continues. In February of 2026 the Department had 323 rented 10- and 6-wheel plow trucks. The Department needed 367 rented trucks to work alongside NHDOT’s own 300, 6 and 10-wheel plow trucks to meet the total need of 667 to cover all of our plow routes. The existing shortage increases the time it takes for us to respond during ice storms and increases the snow on the road during snowstorms due to other state and rental trucks having to cover multiple routes.

The Department reviewed the current winter equipment rental rates and compared them with those of the adjacent New England States. Vermont does not contract hired labor/equipment while Maine does not utilize hired equipment by the hour. Therefore, hourly comparisons could not be completed for these two states. However, Massachusetts does contract for these services and pays rental rates that are roughly 5% to 101% higher than NH’s rates for 1- ton, 5-ton and 10-ton plow trucks (see Appendix B). Higher-paying opportunities at municipalities and in Massachusetts further reduces the pool of contractors willing to contract with the Department for the same or similar services and the Department is having difficulty recruiting and retaining sufficient contracted equipment to meet the needs for snow removal.

In order to maintain service levels, in line with the Snow Removal and Ice Control Policy, the Department must secure contracted labor and equipment. In that regard, the Department plans to increase operator rates by 15% (i.e., non-CDL plow truck operator rates would increase from \$23.00 to \$26.45 per hour and CDL Plow truck operator rates from \$26.45 to \$30.42 per hour depending on the size vehicle), to be included in the overall 15% rental rate increase.

In conjunction with operator rate increases, the Department plans to increase equipment rental rates for the 2026/2027 winter as shown in Appendix B. These rates have been consolidated into four (4) major categories of plow trucks and include the operator rate and adjustment for the change in the fuel base price. The proposed rates result in an increase of 15% for plowing and spreading rates for under 1-ton, 1-2 ton, 6- and 10-wheel trucks and operators. It is expected that this increase in rates will result in an annual cost increase of approximately \$2,160,000 in rental expenditures based on the average costs of the last 2 years, split between the Highway Fund (91%) and the Turnpike Fund (9%) (see Appendix A). The increased cost in hired equipment will reduce the amount of work that can be achieved under the current budget as the Department currently relies on rental contractors to provide more than 60% of the winter maintenance plowing for the southern maintenance Districts (4, 5, 6, & the Turnpike System). While the current budget may be able to provide acceptable service for a light winter, additional funds will be required to cover rental equipment costs for an average or greater than average 2026/2027 winter season.

Although Massachusetts DOT rates will remain 5% to 101% higher than the proposed NH rates, the Department anticipates that these increases will result in a greater ability to secure rental contracts throughout the state and help the Department to meet expected service levels for winter road maintenance.

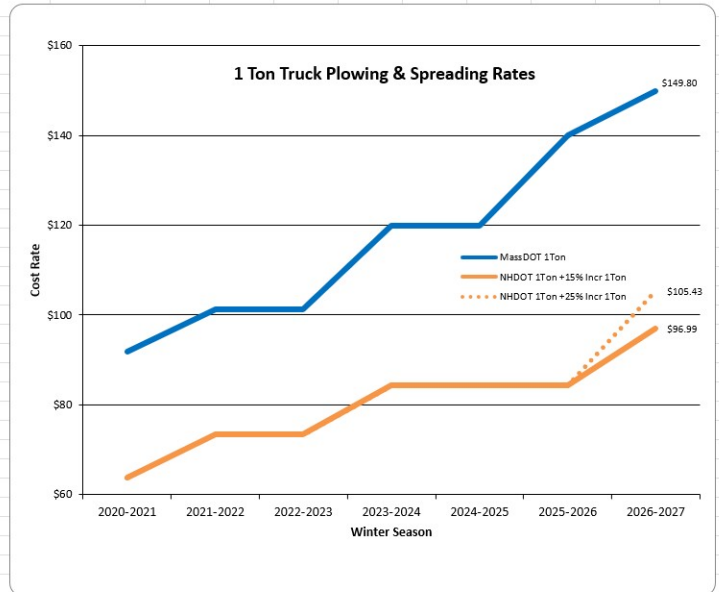
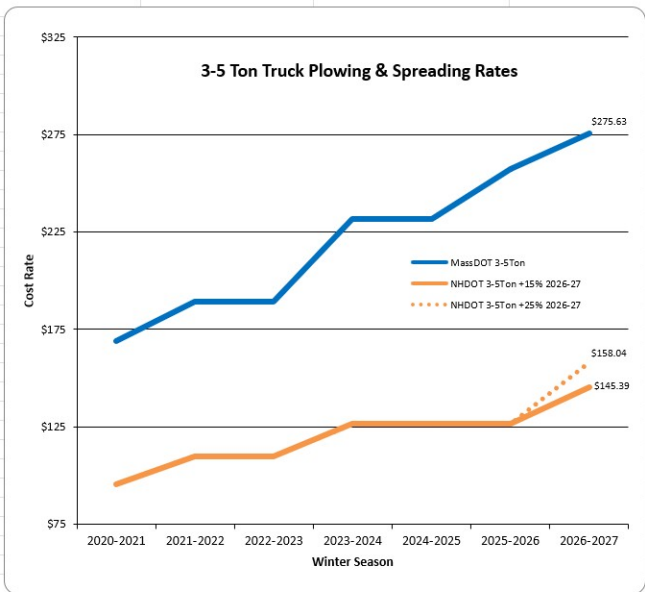
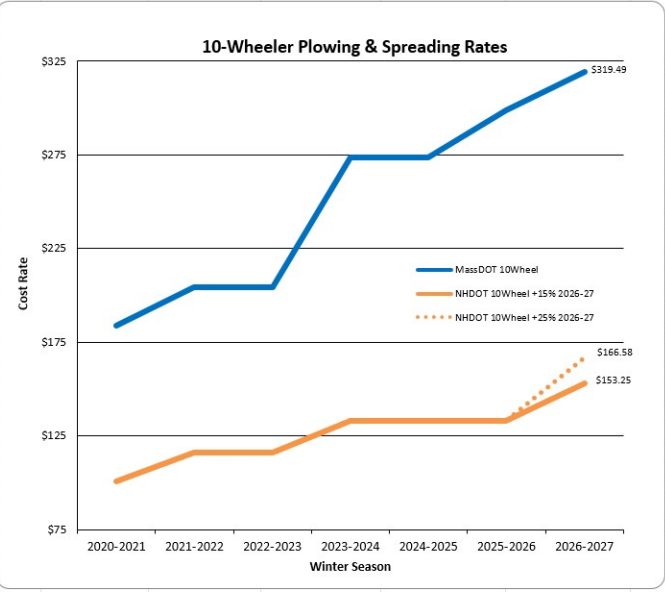
It is respectfully requested that this item be accepted.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'David M. Rodrigue', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

David M. Rodrigue, P.E.
Commissioner

Attachments



Appendix A

Sum of Expenditure Amount Class Description	Equipment	State FY 2025	State FY 2026	Total with 15% Incr 2025	Total with 15% Incr 2026
5501:0PO- 1-2 TON TRUCK PLOWING		\$1,763		\$2,027.45	\$0
55010X0-1-2 TON TRUCK PLOWING &SPREADING		\$160,727	\$238,043	\$184,836.05	\$273,749
55011PO- 3-5 TON TRUCK PLOWING		\$63,624	\$48,878	\$73,167.60	\$56,210
55011XO- 3-5 TON TRUCK PLOWING & SPREADING		\$1,013,210	\$1,250,912	\$1,165,191.50	\$1,438,549
55012PO- OVER5.TON TRUCK PLOWING		\$78,126	\$9,887	\$89,844.90	\$11,370
55012XO- OVER 5.TON TRUCK PLOWING & SPREADING		\$337,973	\$798,769	\$388,668.95	\$918,584
55015PO- 3/4 TON TRUCK PLOWING			\$30,737	\$0.00	\$35,348
55015JW- 3/4 TON TRUCK PLOWING &SPREADING		\$27,391	\$967	\$31,499.65	\$1,112
55203 TRUCK HAULING (SAND, ETC.)		\$1,782	\$628	\$2,049.30	\$722
552:08 PICK-UP TRUCK		\$9,539	\$158	\$10,969.85	\$182
55210 2 TON TRUCK		\$5,229		\$6,013.35	\$0
55210P0-1-2 TON TRUCK PLOWING W/OPR		\$4,109	\$5,114	\$4,725.35	\$5,881
55210XO- 1-2 TON TRUCK PLOWING &SPREADING W/OPR		\$907,599	\$1,185,191	\$1,043,738.85	\$1,362,970
55211PO- 3-5 TON TRUCK PLOWING W/OPR		\$325,643	\$309,561	\$374,489.45	\$355,995
55211XO- 3-5 TON TRUCK PLOWING & SPREADING W/OPR		\$5,009,765	\$6,139,521	\$5,761,229.75	\$7,060,449
55212PO- OVER5.TON TRUCK PLOWING W/OPR		\$290,413	\$236,335	\$333,974.95	\$271,785
55212XO - OVER5.TON TRUCK PLOWING & SPREADING OP		\$3,378,001	\$4,513,505	\$3,884,701.15	\$5,190,531
55215PO- 3/4 TON TRUCK PLOWING W/OPR		\$48,842	\$57,907	\$56,168.30	\$66,593
55215XO - 3/4 TON TRUCK PLOWING & SPREADING W/OPR			\$27,345	\$0.00	\$31,447
55232HO- OVER 51,000TON TRIAXLETRUCK HAULING OP		\$1,062	\$6,614	\$1,221.30	\$7,606
Grand Total		\$11,664,798	\$14,860,072	\$13,414,517.70	\$17,089,083

APPENDIX B

9/29/2026

NH DOT Rental Rate Comparison

	NH DOT current plowing rate*(2025- 2026)	2026-2027 NH DOT proposed plowing rate**	Mass DOT 2026-2027 plowing rate (w/out any bonuses)	NH DOT current plowing & spreading rate* (2025- 2026)	2026-2027 NH DOT proposed plowing & spreading rate***	Mass DOT 2026-2027 plowing & spreading rate (w/out any bonuses)***
14,000 GVWR truck with reversible plow, electric hoist and 3 CY spreader (1 Ton truck)	\$77.79	\$89.46	\$126.34	\$84.34	\$96.99	\$140.00
36,000 GVWR truck with reversible plow, wing plow, 6 CY spreader, over 2-ton hydraulic hoist, ground speed spreader control, on/off pre-wet system (3 to 5 ton truck)	\$105.29	\$121.10	\$222.83	\$126.42	\$145.39	\$261.48
55,000 GVWR truck with reversible plow, wing plow, 11 CY spreader, over 2-ton hydraulic hoist, ground speed spreader control, on/off pre-wet system (10 wheel truck)	\$110.68	\$127.28	\$263.94	\$133.25	\$153.25	\$308.64

*includes \$23.00/hr operator rate for non-commercial vehicle and \$26.45/hr operator rate for commercial vehicles.

**includes \$26.45/hr operator rate for non-commercial vehicle and \$30.42/hr operator rate for commercial vehicles.

***Includes rate for 6 to 9 CY spreader with 150 gallon pre-wet system, ground-speed oriented (\$38.50) for trucks less than 33,000 GVWR and rate for 10 CY or greater spreader with 150 gallon pre-wet system, ground-speed oriented (\$44.70) for trucks greater than 33,001 GVWR

Mass rates includes the equipment, accessories, licensed qualified operators and operating costs, including but not limited to, insurance, registration fees, maintenance, repairs and fuel.