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May 8, 2025

Representative John Koznick
Chair, Transportation Finance and Policy

Representative Erin Koegel
Chair, Transportation Finance and Policy

Senator Scott Dibble
Chair, Transportation

RE: Conference Committee on House and Senate Versions of HF 2438

Dear Conference Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to share comments on HF 2438. I have appreciated the opportunity to work with both legislators and staff throughout the legislative session to ensure public safety remains a top priority in our transportation committee. As conference committee gets underway, I wanted to provide additional feedback regarding the provisions in each bill. The agency appreciates the following items that are included in both the House and Senate Versions:

- **Investment in Recruiting and Retention of State Troopers.** The funding included for recruiting and retention will not only help ensure that open positions can be filled but also that the State Patrol can effectively prepare for future retirements. This funding is critical in maintaining our current Trooper compliment and recruiting a quality workforce that is reflective of those served. I am hopeful this committee will adopt the Senate position that also includes ongoing funding for a second trooper academy. These investments will strengthen efforts to reduce deaths and injuries on Minnesota's roadways through enforcement and education aligning with the Minnesota State Patrol Strategic Plan.
- **No-Fee Transaction Reimbursement to Service Providers.** The inclusion of the No-Fee Transactions reimbursement for deputy registrars and driver's license agents, as recommended by the Governor, will ensure that these important business partners are compensated for all the work that they do.
- **Commercial Learner's Permit Extension.** I appreciate the extension of the Commercial Learner's Permit from six months to twelve months to align Minnesota with federal commercial driver's license regulations.
- **Driver and Vehicle Services (DVS) Policy Provisions.** Thank you for incorporating the technical changes to name change documents and criminal vehicular operation provisions. Cleaning up these provisions will help DVS administer its services effectively and ensure consistent treatment for individuals who engage in criminal vehicular operation.

- **Planning and Administration Match – Office of Traffic Safety.** The funding for the DPS Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) planning and administration match will allow OTS to fully utilize available federal funding. This funding increase will ensure long-term stability for OTS and improve the ability of OTS to deliver on its mission to eliminate serious injury and fatal crashes.
- **Clarification for the Advisory Council on Traffic Safety (ACTS).** I also appreciate the updates and clarifications for the Advisory Council on Traffic Safety (ACTS). These changes will support traffic safety across the state for years to come.

The agency appreciates the House inclusion of the following Governor's proposals:

- **Grant Administration Authority.** The language providing DPS with agency wide grant administration authority to utilize up to a set percentage of grant appropriations to administer grants will protect public funds. Providing DPS the authority for these administrative costs is vital to ensuring adequate resources for critical oversight functions for grants such as monitoring grantees and programs to ensure compliance with requirements, ensuring timely financial and progress reporting, and ensuring compliance with state and federal requirements. These functions are a critical component of preventing fraud or mismanagement, as well as ensuring grant dollars serve their intended purposes.
- **Online Driver's License Renewal.** Driver and Vehicle Services (DVS) division is committed to providing customers with the services they need in the manner they want to receive them. Many customers will appreciate the option to go online for every other renewal.
- **Seatbelt Requirement for Class II ATVs.** The inclusion of the requirement for seatbelts in Class II ATVs, when the unit is factory equipped with a restraint system, and when the Class II ATV is operated on or within the right-of way of a public roadway will reduce the number of serious injuries and deaths that result from an occupant being ejected during a crash event.
- **Expanded Background Checks for Auto Dealers.** The expanded background checks for auto dealers included in this bill will strengthen consumer protections.
- **Excessive Speed Penalty.** Thank you for including the provisions recommended by the Governor to standardize penalties for excessive speeding. Drivers traveling through areas at more than 35 miles over the posted speed limit are as dangerous as those who travel at over 100 miles per hour and the penalties should be the same. I am hopeful the committee will reconsider inclusion of these important public safety initiatives.

The agency appreciates the Senate inclusion of the following Governor's proposals:

- **DPS Operating Adjustment.** Thank you for including the Governor's recommended operating adjustment for our administration and transportation divisions. This measured operating adjustment will assist DPS in addressing cost pressures while still requiring us to make strategic decisions to ensure minimal impacts to the public safety work of our divisions.
- **DVS Rulemaking Authority.** I appreciate the inclusion of the rulemaking authority for the DVS Ignition Interlock Device Program (IIDP). While not funded at the Governor's recommended levels, adding this authority to DVS will improve public safety. IIDP Program Guidelines and Manufacturer Certification Standards that have been drafted and approved through the full rulemaking process will better serve Ignition Interlock participants and participating manufacturers, ensure transparency, and provide DVS the ability to update the standards in response to legislative changes.
- **License Plates at Time of Vehicle Transfer.** The Governor's recommendation to require Minnesotans to change license plates at the time of transfer will result in additional revenue to deputy registrars and reduce the nuisance of tickets and tolls going to the prior owner.

The Agency has concerns with the following provisions that appear in the House version of the omnibus bill:

- **DPS Operating Adjustment.** The measured operating adjustment recommended by the Governor would assist DPS in addressing cost pressures while still requiring us to make strategic decisions to ensure

minimal impacts to the public safety work of our divisions. The amount included in the House version of this bill will require difficult decisions and will have serious ramifications for public safety in Minnesota. The cuts to the State Patrol are particularly concerning and will result in fewer troopers. I urge this committee to adopt the Senate position on the DPS operating adjustment.

- **Minnesota State Patrol General Fund Reduction.** With this cut from the General Fund or without replacement of these funds from the Trunk Highway Fund, the cuts to the State Patrol are particularly concerning and will result in fewer troopers.
- **Shifting Blackout Plate Revenue.** I encourage this committee to exclude the changes to the revenue from the blackout plates. As a special revenue funded division, DVS is charged with generating revenue from fees to cover all its operating expenses and meet customer expectations without general fund dollars. The blackout plate revenue is based on a contribution fee that is elected by the consumer who chooses to have a blackout plate. This creative idea provides revenue to support DVS operations without the need to raise fees on all consumers. I urge this committee to keep revenue generated from blackout plates directed into the Driver and Vehicle Services Operating Account to support the services DVS provides.

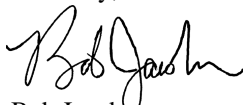
The Agency has concerns with the following provision that appear in the Senate version of the omnibus bill:

- **Changes to DVS Online Appointment Scheduling.** The scheduling parameters set in this bill would require either a very expensive customization of MNDRIVE or the purchase of a separate product as MNDRIVE cannot currently determine which individuals live closest to which exam stations. Changing the way DVS releases and schedules appointments will almost assuredly result in fewer appointments available for customers and increase complaints from customers. With the investments made by this committee into DVS examiners over the last few years, DVS is now fully staffed. Over the last three months, DVS has consistently had thousands of Class D appointments available statewide, including metro appointment availability, within the next 30 days. Making changes to this system now will not only be costly but will result in less service availability for customers. I urge you not to make changes to appointment requirements and risk returning DVS to the days of limited appointment availability.

I am also hopeful that this committee will reconsider inclusion of the Minnesota State Patrol Headquarters in the final version of the bill. Combining the six metro locations into one centralized space will assist with recruiting and retention, ensure compliance with CALEA standards, provide necessary storage space for vehicles and evidence, and allow the State Patrol to meet current and future demands to serve the public.

I appreciate your consideration of my comments, and I look forward to working with all of you to come to an agreement that is best for the people of Minnesota. Please reach out with any questions or comments. We are available to meet at your convenience.

Sincerely,



Bob Jacobson
Commissioner, Department of Public Safety