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February 21, 2025

Representative Koznick, Chair
House Transportation Committee
Centennial Office Building
St. Paul MN 55155

Dear Chair Koznick,

I am writing to express concerns with HF 795, which is being heard before the committee today.

HF 795 proposes language prescribing the manner in which Department of Public Safety's Driver and Vehicle Services Division (DVS) must make Class D road exams available for booking. Road exam availability is a crucial issue that impacts Minnesotans, and DVS is working hard to increase appointment availability across the state. In 2023 and 2024, the legislature made investments in DVS by appropriating additional funding from the Driver and Vehicle Services Operating Account (DVSOA) to allow DVS to hire more examiners and improve service delivery. The additional staffing, along with creative solutions and improved efficiencies, has resulted in greater exam availability than DVS has seen in some time. For example, on February 10, there were over 7,000 open exam appointments available in the next 30 days throughout Minnesota, including thousands in the metro area. On February 17 and 18, there were 7,394 open exam appointments available in the next 30 days throughout Minnesota. In FY24, 53,698 exam appointments went unfilled throughout Minnesota.

The changes to appointment availability required in HF 795 will result in decreased exam availability and more frustration for customers. In the past, DVS offered a percentage of appointments six months into the future, and those appointments filled immediately. Although DVS opened more appointments closer to the appointment date, as prescribed in this bill, the impression given to customers searching for appointments was that there were no available appointments for over six months. It also required customers to search more often before finding appointments. In addition, the no-show and cancellation rate for appointments scheduled more than 30 days out was 34%, tying up exam slots that could otherwise

have gone to applicants ready to test. In 2024, of all the Class D cancellations, 48% were either no-shows or cancelled in the last 24 hours before the appointment, making it nearly impossible to fill the exam slot.

DVS recognizes that there have been real appointment shortages that have caused delays in exams and customer frustration. DVS switched to the 30-day appointment model in September 2022 to create more availability and ensure that appointments never need to be cancelled due to staffing issues. With exam appointments made more than 30 days in advance, DVS will no longer be able to guarantee staffing coverage for appointments and may have to cancel appointments due to staff illness or turnover. DVS is eager to improve exam availability and with the most recent investments in exam services and the support of this committee, DVS is finally making real progress. HF 795 will erase the progress that DVS has made with exam appointment availability and eliminate the ability of DVS to be flexible to the customer needs in the future.

Based on available data, it is unclear if the increased no-show fee required by HF 795 would demonstrably impact the cancellation rate. DVS is committed to continuing to find creative solutions to improve exam availability, but HF 795 will not accomplish these goals.

I want to thank the House Transportation Committee for the strong partnership we have had during my time here. We share the overall goal of providing high-quality DVS services to all Minnesotans. We look forward to continued discussion and appreciate your consideration of these concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Pong Xiong', with a stylized, flowing script.

Pong Xiong
Director, DPS Driver and Vehicle Services Division

cc: HF 795, chief author – Representative Myers