



## Office of the Commissioner

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April 11, 2025

Chair Koznick, Chair Koegel and Members of the House Transportation Committee,

The Department of Public Safety (DPS) works to serve all communities to build a safer Minnesota. This is a long-shared goal of this committee. The investments included in the Governor's and Lt. Governor's transportation budget bill and this committee's bill come amid a challenging budget outlook. Given these constraints, I recognize this bill has to contend with several difficult decisions.

I am concerned that this bill includes a lower DPS operating adjustment than the Governor's budget. 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 this bill will require difficult decisions 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 fully fund the modest operating adjustment recommended by the Governor.

Thank you for including the hiring and recruitment initiatives for the Minnesota State Patrol. This 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 Troopers and recruiting a quality workforce that is reflective of those served. However, this bill only contains funding to run an additional academy one time. I hope the committee will reconsider making this an ongoing investment for the State Patrol.

There are several important items included for DPS's Driver and Vehicle Services Division (DVS). 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. 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.

I also appreciate the inclusion of the authorization of online renewal for driver's licenses, changes to dealer plates, and the expansion of background checks for auto dealers. DVS 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.

Alcohol  
and Gambling  
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Emergency  
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Minnesota  
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Office of  
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Office of  
Traffic Safety

State Fire  
Marshal

The expanded background checks for auto dealers included in this bill will strengthen consumer protections.

The inclusion of the No-Fee Transactions 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. I encourage this committee to reconsider the inclusion of the Governor's recommendation to require Minnesotans to change license plates at the time of transfer. This change will result in additional revenue to deputy registrars and reduce the nuisance of tickets and tolls going to the prior owner.

I am concerned that the rulemaking authority for the Ignition Interlock Device Program (IIDP) is not included in this bill. 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. I appreciate the partial funding provided in this bill but without the rulemaking authority, it will be less impactful.

I also encourage this committee to reconsider the changes to the revenue from the blackout plates. As a special revenue funded agency, 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.

I also want to thank you for including funding for the DPS Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) planning and administration match. This increase will allow OTS to fully utilize available federal funding to ensure long-term stability for OTS. It will improve the ability of OTS to deliver on its mission to eliminate serious injury and fatal crashes. 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. I also appreciate the technical changes to the authority of the Advisory Council on Traffic Safety (ACTS). These changes will support traffic safety across the state for years to come.

I am grateful for the inclusion of the standardized 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.

Thank you also for the DPS agency wide grant administration authority to utilize a set percentage of grant appropriations to administer grants. 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.

I would ask the committee to reconsider adding the funding for the new Minnesota State Patrol headquarters. As this committee has recognized, 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 look forward to further conversations on how to fund this important state building.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill. We look forward to continuing to work with the chair, committee members, and staff to ensure this bill has all the details right, can be effectively administered, and accomplishes the committee's goals. Thank you for your support of public safety.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bob Jacobson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Bob" being more prominent than the last name "Jacobson".

Bob Jacobson  
Commissioner, Department of Public Safety