



Office of the Commissioner

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dps.mn.gov

April 17, 2023

Chair Marty and members of the Senate Finance Committee,

The Department of Public Safety (DPS) serves all communities to build a safer Minnesota. The critical investments included in the governor and lieutenant governor's public safety budget recommendations come from listening to the needs of Minnesotans and our transportation experts. I am grateful for the important investments contained in Senate File 3157, including funding to maintain current service levels. My thanks to Chair Dibble and the Senate Transportation Committee members and staff for their work. I look forward to working with the Senate chairs and members to help address areas where future investments could be made.

This bill strongly supports the Minnesota State Patrol. Thank you for fully funding the aviation request for a new helicopter, new pilots, a headquarters predesign and the current year deficiency. These investments are needed.

DPS desperately needs funding for multiple support divisions. The administrative and community engagement requests DPS put forward would help all of our divisions in numerous ways and, in turn, help keep our communities safe. DPS' Office of Communications creates and disseminates potential lifesaving information and helps with translation services. We need to grow their abilities. Adding staff to our Human Resources Department will help us retain, recruit, and hire new staff including, state troopers. We also need to grow our community engagement ability at DPS so we can connect with the public and better serve every Minnesotan. Lastly, our fiscal division needs to add staff to keep up with the growth of the agency, increased reporting requirements, and help safeguard public funds. We are currently understaffed in these areas. Without this investment, we cannot meet the demands of the legislature or the communities we serve.

I also want to call your attention to the DPS pipeline safety education and enforcement staffing request, which unfortunately is not funded in this bill. I believe we can all understand how important pipeline safety is and why we need to ensure we have the staffing needed to prevent an accident from happening.

The \$11.7 million invested in our Driver and Vehicle Services (DVS) division over the biennium improves and expands DVS' important work. One critical area of investment is for new DVS vehicle inspection sites. This is an area of DVS where we are not currently meeting the needs

Alcohol
and Gambling
Enforcement

Bureau of
Criminal
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Driver
and Vehicle
Services

Emergency
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Networks

Homeland
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Minnesota
State Patrol

Office of
Communications

Office of
Justice Programs

Office of
Pipeline Safety

Office of
Traffic Safety

State Fire
Marshal

April 14, 2023

of Minnesotans — the strong investment in this bill will help. However, there are still several DVS efforts we hope to see funded and other areas where I hope we can continue to work together.

I urge the committee to continue the funding needed to maintain DVS' current staffing level. Without this funding, DVS will lose over 30 examiner positions. Over the last year, those staff members have helped DVS complete more class D and CDL road tests than ever before. Reducing this staffing will move DVS backward and reduce services in Minnesota.

I wish to have continued conversations about the number of exam stations and other exam station requirements. However, this bill makes multiple changes while at the same time requiring DVS to report on the future of exam stations. We should do the report first, make the plan and then make legislative changes.

We know there is more work to be done with DVS and our deputy registrar partners. We strongly believe deputy registrars should be paid for the work they do and this bill will generate over \$13.5 million each year for that work. We do have concerns with non-state employees getting paid for work completed entirely by state employees. This bill provides an additional \$20 million over the biennium to deputy registrars from the general fund in addition to the new revenue generated by fees.

The new online transaction surcharge will disincentivize customers to submit renewals online because it will cost more. This goes against DVS' customer-focused approach. Most deputy registrar locations are only open during normal business hours Monday through Friday. Online services provide an opportunity to seek services outside of those business hours. We are concerned an additional online fee would have an equity impact.

Another way DVS is focused on meeting customer needs is online credential renewal every other cycle. This bill currently does not allow for this new service. DVS was allowed to handle online renewal during the pandemic. We know that this is a more accessible and equitable way to meet customer demand.

Thank you for supporting the Traffic Safety Council. This will help our Office of Traffic Safety continue collaboratively leading and fostering traffic safety efforts. I hope we can keep discussing the importance of the Council combined with the Traffic Safety Data Analytics Center, which is only funded at half of the requested amount. These pieces together will help move Minnesota to the forefront of traffic safety.

I am confident we can continue to work together to find a resolution to these issues. DPS serves all communities to build a safer Minnesota. Thank you for making the investments to move this mission forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bob Jacobson".

Bob Jacobson
Commissioner Department of Public Safety