



## Office of the Commissioner

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April 25, 2024

Chair Marty and Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

I am writing to highlight the sections of SF5284 that the Department of Public Safety (DPS) supports and identify some ideas included in the bill that are of concern. I am grateful that this bill includes the full recommendation of the Governor and Lieutenant Governor's supplemental budget for DPS Driver and Vehicle Services Division (DVS). The additional funding included will allow DVS to hire up to 22 additional examiners who will be assigned to work in areas of the state with the highest demand for Class D skills exams. This additional funding will help DVS better serve Minnesotans.

While I appreciate the inclusion of funding for DVS examiners, I have serious concerns about other provisions in this bill. The amendment that was adopted that would require fee sharing with private industry and local governments is problematic. Deputy Registrars (DRs) and Driver's License Agents (DLAs) need to be fairly compensated for the work they do, but the State should not provide extra income to private businesses and local governments for work which is completed entirely by State agencies and staff.

Sharing fees across these various entities will drain state resources and limit services that could be provided by DVS in the future. In last year's Transportation bill, the state made investments in DRs and DLAs by increasing compensation for DRs and DLAs, added an additional fee only available to DRs for in-person service, and provided \$6 million worth of proportional payments to DRs and full-service providers (FSPs).

I also have concerns about the amendment that would provide \$25 to DRs and DLAs for any transaction that did not include a filing fee. While I understand the intent behind this provision and agree that DRs and DLAs should be compensated for their work, the language of this bill is not narrowly tailored to achieve this intent. The language as written could be interpreted to pay a DR or DLA for transactions they are self-correcting due to an error. In addition, the fee of \$25 is higher than any filing fee currently charged in statute. To ensure proper compensation to DRs and DLAs, this payment would be better set at the existing filing fee that matches the transaction type.

Also included in last year's Transportation bill was a requirement that DVS conduct an in-depth study of the financial status of all DRs and DLAs. This report will evaluate the financial status of all DRs and DLAs and provide recommendations to the legislature regarding funding for DRs and DLAs. Any decision on additional ongoing revenues for these businesses should wait until that report is complete and the legislature has had time to consider the recommendations.

- Alcohol and Gambling Enforcement
- Bureau of Criminal Apprehension
- Driver and Vehicle Services
- Emergency Communication Networks
- Homeland Security and Emergency Management
- Minnesota State Patrol
- Office of Communications
- Office of Justice Programs
- Office of Pipeline Safety
- Office of Traffic Safety
- State Fire Marshal

Finally, Office of Traffic Safety and the State Patrol are worried about the public safety implications of the motorcycle lane splitting authorized by this bill and oppose its inclusion. Motorcycle season is very short in Minnesota, and motorists are rarely on the lookout for motorcycles. Allowing lane splitting also poses enforcement issues, as only a motorcycle could pursue a rider to enforce the limitations in the bill. The proposal to fund a public awareness campaign on lane splitting from the Motorcycle Safety Account is not enough to create a truly robust statewide awareness campaign around the new law, while at the same time limiting resources for other motorcycle safety efforts.

I am confident we can continue to work together to find a resolution to these issues. I want to thank Chair Dibble, members of the Transportation committee and staff for all the work this session. DPS works to serve all communities to build a safer Minnesota. Thank you for making investments to move this mission forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bob Jacobson". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned to the left of a vertical line.

Bob Jacobson  
Commissioner of Public Safety