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Chair Marty and Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on Senate File 2082 (SF2082). The Department of Public Safety (DPS) works to serve all communities to build a safer Minnesota. I want to thank Chair Dibble and the members of the Senate Transportation Committee for their work in crafting this bill and their support of DPS. The investments included in SF2082 come amid a challenging budget outlook. Given these constraints, I recognize this bill has to contend with several difficult decisions.

I am grateful for the inclusion of the DPS operating adjustment at the level recommended by the Governor. 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.

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. These investments will also strengthen efforts of reducing deaths and injuries on Minnesota's roadways through enforcement and education aligning with the Minnesota State Patrol Strategic Plan.

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.

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 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.

I appreciate that the extension of the Commercial Learner's Permit from six months to twelve months to align Minnesota with federal commercial driver's license regulations. The language to require Minnesotans to change license plates at the time of transfer will benefit customers by requiring new owners to complete registration paperwork thereby preventing erroneous toll and parking charges to the previous owner. This provision will also result in additional revenue to deputy registrars as these transactions are completed in a deputy registrar office.

I also want to note that 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

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crashes. 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.

I also want to point out a few items where this bill differs from the Governor's recommendations. I am concerned to see this bill does not include the provisions to give DPS agency wide grant administration authority to utilize up to a set percentage of grant appropriations to administer grants. The legislature set the allowable administrative percentages but did not cover existing grant programs. 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 am hopeful the committee will reconsider inclusion of funding for the new Minnesota State Patrol metro headquarters. 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.

This bill does not include 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.

I would also like to see the authorization of online renewal for driver's licenses, changes to dealer plates, and the expansion of background checks for auto dealers added to this bill. DVS is committed to providing customers with the services they need in the manner they want to receive them. Many customers would appreciate the option to go online to complete these transactions for every other renewal. Dealer plates in Minnesota lack guardrails such as a limitation on the number of plates a dealer can have, and Minnesota dealer plates have been found improperly used in other states. Adding reasonable limitations on dealer plates better serves dealers and the public. I would also like to see expanded background checks for auto dealers included in this bill to strengthen consumer protection.

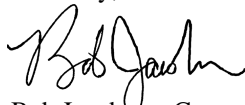
This bill does not include the Governor's recommendation to require the use of seatbelts in Class II ATVs when the unit is factory equipped with a restraint system, and when the Class II ATV is operated on or within the right-of-way of a public roadway. This requirement will reduce the number of serious injuries and deaths that result from an occupant being ejected during a crash event.

Finally, I want to note my concerns with the inclusion of the changes to DVS exam appointment scheduling. The scheduling parameters set in this bill would require either a very expensive customization of MNDRIIVE or the purchase of a separate product as MNDRIIVE 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 complaints. 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 to not make changes to appointment requirements and risk returning DVS to the days of limited appointment availability.

The changes to the motorcycle lane filtering law included in this bill will provide additional safeguards for this activity that do not currently exist today. DPS has continued safety concerns with lane filtering, but these changes provide important changes that will minimize the risks to motorcyclists and vehicles.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill. I want to again thank the members of the Senate Transportation Committee and especially Chair Dibble for their support of DPS and our Transportation Divisions. I look forward to our continued partnership to support public safety in Minnesota.

Sincerely,



Bob Jacobson, Commissioner