



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES

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**Testimony of Robert M. Ward, Commissioner  
Department of Motor Vehicles' Agency Budget Presentation  
Appropriations Committee  
February 9, 2009**

The Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) appreciates the opportunity to appear before the Appropriations Committee and discuss Governor Rell's proposed budget.

The budget before you will allow the DMV to carry out its core functions of issuing a secure driver license, maintaining a license sanction system, maintaining a motor vehicle registration system, operating as the state's lead agency for Federal Motor Carrier Safety Inspections and serving as a primary revenue generator for the Special Transportation Fund (STF). The DMV collects over \$400 million in fees that are deposited into the STF.

It's also important to note that this agency is responsible for duties that stretch far beyond vehicle and driver safety to include organ donation registration, municipal property tax enforcement, emissions regulation, and oversight of motor vehicle-related businesses, to name a few.

The budget before you is the result of DMV's efforts to work within the State's fiscal constraints and refocus our efforts on basic, core responsibilities. Primarily through a reduction in current services (elimination of vacant positions and streamlined operations) this proposal will save the Special Transportation Fund more than \$12 million over the next biennium. Governor Rell's commitment to our on-going computer modernization efforts, including a new \$3 million bonding authorization for FY 2010, will mitigate these cuts and allow us to employ new technologies which expedite and improve the delivery of our services.

In her budget, the Governor has also included a provision that consolidates the State's weigh station operations by transferring 11 non-sworn Department of Public Safety employees to DMV and adding 2 new Motor Vehicle Inspector positions. Placing all weigh station responsibilities under one agency, the Department of Motor Vehicles, will facilitate the oversight and coordination of scale operations.

In an effort to keep my remarks brief and answer any questions that Committee members have, below I have provided some background on the Department, including some recent accomplishments and projects.

- A massive modernization effort to re-engineer DMV's business processes and technology infrastructure is underway. Over the next several years, these new systems will ultimately provide integrated license and registration files.
- Effective August 1, 2008, DMV implemented both legislative and administrative changes aimed at improving the training and credentialing processes for teen

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drivers. These changes include imposing a new, 48-hour license seizure for teens who violate graduated license laws, doubling the number of hours required for behind-the-wheel training to forty hours, extending the passenger restrictions from six months to one year, and moving the curfew an hour earlier to 11 p.m. DMV also stopped allowing driving schools to issue learner's permits- thereby requiring all sixteen and seventeen year-olds to visit a DMV Branch for eye-testing, review (and electronic capturing) of identity documentation and a more comprehensive knowledge test. As part of the effort to ensure the integrity of our credentials, DMV now issues learners' permits with photographs. This Department is committed to producing responsible, well-trained, new drivers, and the Center for Teen Safe Driving within the agency was created last summer to be a policy, information, and data clearinghouse.

- DMV is in the final stages of an upgrade to the systems and equipment that are used to issue and renew licenses and non-driver identification cards. The upgrade is being done, with DMV oversight, by the vendor that provides these systems and includes a new format and security features for these documents. DMV has also carefully evaluated the option to issue licenses by mail, on a centralized basis, as is done in other states including New York, but, has decided to continue to issue credentials on an over-the-counter basis for the convenience of our customers.
- In July 2007, DMV instituted an Internet registration renewal system which will likely be expanded. To date, over 16% of eligible renewals have been renewed via the Internet.
- Recognizing the importance of credit cards in day-to-day business transactions, a Pilot Project was begun in the Wethersfield Branch to accept them. Approximately 20% of their transactions are now paid for with credit cards, and we are working to expand this service.
- DMV continues to seek ways to enhance our highway safety programs, including our partnership with the federal government under the Motor Carrier Safety Assistance Program and our Administrative Per Se License Suspension and Ignition Interlock Programs for individuals charged with drunk driving. Last year, with the assistance of a grant from the National Highway Safety Traffic Administration, DMV appointed an attorney to assist in the prosecution of drunk driving suspension cases.

In closing, I realize this is going to be among the more challenging legislative sessions that we have faced. My staff and I look forward to working with the Governor and the Legislature in the coming months to pursue strategic initiatives that will create efficiencies and save money.