



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

OFFICE OF POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

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Testimony Supporting Senate Bill No. 1018

AN ACT CONCERNING THE TRANSFER OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR WEIGH STATIONS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES, THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ELECTRONIC RENEWAL NOTICES AND THE ELIMINATION OF VISION SCREENING TESTS FOR MOTOR VEHICLE OPERATORS

Senator Maynard, Representative Guerrero and distinguished members of the Transportation Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony on Senate Bill No. 1018, AN ACT CONCERNING THE TRANSFER OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR WEIGH STATIONS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES, THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ELECTRONIC RENEWAL NOTICES AND THE ELIMINATION OF VISION SCREENING TESTS FOR MOTOR VEHICLE OPERATORS.

The purpose of this bill is to implement several operational and organizational changes within the Department of Motor Vehicles' operations and mission in order to improve service and increase efficiency.

The major component of this bill is the consolidation of weigh station operations to the Department of Motor Vehicles.

Current statute dictates that both the Commissioner of Public Safety and Motor Vehicles shall staff the weigh stations throughout the state. With Senate Bill 1018, the Governor proposes to place all statutory responsibility of the state's weigh station under the auspices of the DMV.

The consolidation allows the weigh station program to maintain the same hours of current operation. In order to accomplish this initiative, seven Vehicle Weight and Safety Inspectors will be transferred from the Department of Public Safety (DPS) to DMV to work with the Motor Vehicle Inspectors dedicated to weigh stations and truck safety. The Governor's proposal also entails stationing one trooper with each inspection group. As a result of this

proposal, costs of almost \$500,000 will be realigned from the General Fund to the Special Transportation Fund. The current split responsibility of the weigh stations between the DMV and DPS, in addition to the extra costs associated with having troopers working weigh stations with inspectors, results in an inefficient use of state resources.

The transfer of the weigh station responsibility also shifts the DPS portion of the mandated reporting requirement to the DMV.

Another step toward efficiency and austerity is the proposal to eliminate renewal notices for licenses and non-license identification (ID) cards, included in this bill. This proposal eliminates the statutory mandate on the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles to send renewal notices to customers, currently done so by mail. The Commissioner will now be able to notify customers by electronic means. In order to replace the current hard copy mailed versions, the DMV can now partner with a private firm to provide reminder notices in a variety of electronic format options which would be available to those individuals who sign up for the service. This initiative would provide over \$200,000 in savings by eliminating materials, postage and other costs associated with mailing hard copy renewal notifications.

Also, through this legislation, the Vision Screening Program will be eliminated. Section 10 of PA 09-137 delays the start of the program until July 1, 2011. The program would require that the DMV screen the vision of all licensed motor vehicle operators, an estimated 300,000 renewal applicants annually, and has been delayed since originally proposed in FY 1991. SB 1018 will repeal section 14-11 of the C.G.S., thereby eliminating the requirement that the DMV introduce the program and the resources required to do so. The repeal would help avoid costs of over \$2 million in each of the fiscal years of the coming biennium.

In order to evolve with the times, where other forms of technology allow access to DMV information important to the public, the toll-free customer service number for the DMV, which is currently mandated through 4-60q of the C.G.S., would also be eliminated. All information calls would be directed to the DMV's Harford exchange number. A portion of customers requiring information from the DMV would be required to make a toll call to the DMV. However, with the increase of cell phone usage, the impact of the elimination of the customer service number to the public would be significantly decreased. Information is also available through the DMV website. This proposal would save \$80,000 in toll-free phone charge fees to the DMV.

In the same spirit of seeking efficiencies and strengthening the core mission of state agencies, it is proposed the handicapped driver program be eliminated. The language would do away with training provided by DMV staff to handicapped individuals who are seeking

driver licenses. As a result, the DMV would only test those individuals when they present themselves for the driver test, as is the case with all other driver candidates. Connecticut is currently the only state in which the DMV provides this service. Due to the specialty of the training, the employees who train the applicant are the same employees who test the applicant. This proposal would save \$131,000 by eliminating training positions within the DMV. This option would not result in layoffs as the reduction could be achieved through attrition.

I would like to again thank the committee for the opportunity to present this testimony. I respectfully request the Committee support this bill and I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.