



Association of Minnesota Counties

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September 8, 2017

Representative Paul Torkelson
Chair, Transportation Finance Committee
MN House of Representatives
381 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chairman Torkelson:

On behalf of the Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC), I would like to offer you and the members of the Transportation Finance Committee some feedback on the rollout of the new MNLARS system for motor vehicle registration. You have been well briefed by the deputy registrars, the actual professionals in the field, on the specific issues they are facing in using this system. I don't want to belabor those points but talk about the bigger picture issues this rollout has caused.

First and foremost, the MNLARS problems have created a very unfortunate experience for our customers. From long wait times in offices, to multiple trips to our offices for a transaction that formerly could be completed in one, to long delays receiving tabs, plates, etc. taxpayers and vehicle owners in Minnesota have borne the brunt of a problem that is not of their making. Our frontline county staff are doing their best to serve these customers as thoroughly and efficiently as possible, but the MNLARS system is not a tool that allows them to achieve that goal.

Secondly, the deputy registrar system was designed to be fee supported. In order to process transactions in MNLARS our staff spends considerably more time to complete a process that results in the same fee revenue coming in. This is due to "work arounds" for identified problems or other actions that simply cannot be accomplished in the system. Counties throughout the state have paid significant overtime and other staffing related costs, while the fees collected to pay for the service have actually declined due to our inability to process as many transactions in a day. This ultimately shifts the burden of providing these services to local property taxpayers, which is not a sustainable model. It is our hope that should these issues continue long term, the legislature would consider options to bring additional revenue to the deputy registrars for the service they provide.

Finally, we would support the suggestion that an oversight committee be established to include all stakeholders and help ensure that future functions that transition to MNLARS are not similarly problematic.

Thank you for your work on this issue.

Sincerely,

Gary Hendrickx, Swift County Commissioner
President, Association of Minnesota Counties

Keith Carlson, Executive Director
Minnesota Inter-County Association