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April 12th, 2021

Dear Chair Moran and Ways and Means Committee Members,

I am writing today in support of HF 1684, the Omnibus House Transportation bill. I will also relay a few areas of concerns that I believe need to be addressed.

Thank you for including critical investments in the State of Minnesota's Department of Public Safety ("DPS") in this bill. HF 1684 funds a majority of Governor Walz's 2022-2023 budget recommendations, making important investments in the State Patrol, Driver and Vehicle Services and the Department as a whole. These investments include:

- The DPS Operating Adjustment will allow DPS to continue providing critical services and effectively manage a large agency.
- Providing funding for tails associated with the already implemented 8.4% salary increase for troopers gives the State Patrol the required ongoing funding needed for trooper salaries and increased pension contribution costs.
- Allowing DPS to carryforward a portion of the funds necessary to host an academy will ensure the State Patrol can efficiently complete the academy starting this summer.
- Equipping the State Patrol with body worn cameras is a necessity in today's public safety environment. State Troopers are eager to implement this technology.
- The investment made in Capitol Security Enhancements helps address the bipartisan concerns about safety at the Capitol given recent events. The Capitol is the people's house, and these investments are necessary to increase public safety on the entire complex.
- The State Patrol has not added road patrol troopers since 2005. With the increased trends in speeding and traffic fatalities the additional troopers are needed on our roads. This includes additional capacity for education, enforcement, and crash reconstruction.
- Allowing the State Patrol to deposit abandoned funds in the General Fund is a simple solution to address an identified problem.
- As the federal deadline for REAL ID was extended to October 1, 2021, DVS expects a surge in Minnesotans applying for a REAL ID compliant card. This funding will allow DVS to use temporary staffing to keep the processing time to an acceptable level.

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- DVS is committed to transforming the way all Minnesotans receive driver and vehicle services. This investment in DVS Staffing and Operations will support DVS's push to improve customer experience.
- Modifying driver's license suspension authority and removing multiple reinstatement fees for misdemeanor will positively affect thousands of Minnesotans every year. This will reduce the debt cycle created when individuals lack resources to attend court hearings for petty misdemeanors or pay fines related to operating or parking motor vehicles, end up with a revoked or suspended license, continue to drive, and acquire additional citations with no ability to pay.
- Expanding partial payment of driver's license reinstatement fees provides greater equity for all individuals with an impaired driving arrest. This option will also allow more individuals to pay the reinstatement fee over time while maintaining valid driving privileges.
- Expanding lifetime veteran plates to include the "Proud to Be a Veteran," "American Legion," "Disabled American Veterans," and "Veterans of Foreign Wars" license plates to the category of plates subject to lifetime issuance.
- Allowing DVS to make process improvements based on OLA recommendations to its driver and vehicle records process promotes consistency and is beneficial to all of the records DVS holds.
- Updating the temporary trip permits makes it so out-of-state commercial vehicles pay a more equitable share for the wear and tear of Minnesota public roads.
- Eliminating the statutorily required citizen crash reports eliminates an outdated government document that had no value to the State or those who filed the report.

However, there are a few outstanding issues that DPS continues to have concerns regarding.

- DPS would like to continue working with members on the best avenue to address the State Patrol's needs for costs related to responding to civil unrest and enhanced security currently present at the Capitol. Without these funds, the State Patrol will not have the funding it needs to cover the cost of its normal operations after responding to civil unrest this summer. This request also anticipates the needed funds for the ongoing and future trials that will draw national attention to Minneapolis and the State. Whether in this bill or a standalone deficiency bill these costs must be funded.
- DPS also hopes to continue working with members on restructuring the license plate fees, which would allow fees to pay for the cost of a license plate and will save \$8.2 million per year from the Highway User Tax Distribution fund.
- I have two concerns regarding the provision effecting DVS.
 - While DPS supports modifying driver's license suspensions and no longer stacking fees, the Governor's proposal does not include changing or unstacking the reinstatement fee

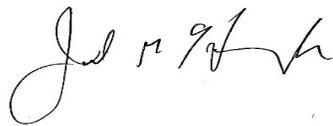
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after a DWI or other substance use offense. The current language in HF 1684 changes the parameters around the \$680 fee.

- The modifications to the ignition interlock policy that would get more individuals on the program is sound policy. The program changes are permanent however, the increased funding needed to handle the increase in participation is only funded for one year. If this funding is not provided ongoing, DVS cannot support the increased workload.
- I have concerns over HF 1684 pulling a total of \$10 million dollars out of the vehicle services operating account to fund the General Fund. This is a special revenue account that is funded by vehicle fees and is used to support DVS and its operations.
- Finally, I will note that the state law enforcement divisions from DNR, State Patrol and BCA have incurred costs associated with the Line 3 replacement project. The PUC provides for relief of these costs through a public safety reimbursement account required by the Line 3 permit. The intent of this account to ensure that tax payers are not footing the bill for the public safety response related to the project. However, the state needs statutory authority to access these funds. The legislature can either provide that authority or appropriate the needed additional general fund costs to cover the ongoing response expenses. The current draft of this bill does neither.

I am confident we can continue to work together to find a resolution to these issues. The Department of Public Safety works to serve all communities to build a safer Minnesota. Thank you for making the investments to move this mission forward.

Sincerely,



John M. Harrington

Commissioner-Department of Public Safety