



Alcohol
and Gambling
Enforcement

Bureau of Criminal
Apprehension

Driver
and Vehicle
Services

Emergency
Communication
Networks

Homeland
Security and
Emergency
Management

Minnesota
State Patrol

Office of
Communications

Office of
Justice Programs

Office of
Pipeline Safety

Office of
Traffic Safety

State Fire
Marshal

Office of the Commissioner

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April 7, 2017

Chair Paul Torkelson
House Transportation Finance Committee
381 State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Chair Scott J. Newman
Senate Transportation Finance and Policy
Committee
95 University Avenue West, Room 3105
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chairs Representative Torkelson and Senator Newman,

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to public safety, a core function of state government and the mission of our agency.

As we have discussed with you and testified to in your committees, there are key proposals in the Governor's budget that we strongly believe are critical for the ongoing work of the Department of Public Safety.

Thank you for supporting our requests for ongoing maintenance of our driver license testing system; support for the ongoing maintenance of the statutorily required crash record system; and the Minnesota State Patrol helicopter in one or both bills.

We also thank you for your support of the public safety officer survivor benefit program, officer health benefits, and the soft body armor reimbursements.

Unfortunately, there are two key investments that are not included in either House or Senate bill.

- **Ongoing MNLARS Operation Funding** to support the ongoing operation, maintenance, and enhancement of the system, which is the expectation of our stakeholders and the legislature.
- **Funding to support the current operations at current levels in the Department of Public Safety.**

Without full funding of these critically needed proposals, services to local law enforcement agencies, stakeholders, and Minnesotans who rely on us to issue driver licenses and motor vehicle transactions will be significantly impacted. The Department respectfully requests that you and the committee fully fund both of these critical public safety needs. Additional information about these proposals is attached.

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Representative Torkelson and Senator Newman
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In addition, there are several policy provisions included in the House and/or Senate proposals that raise concerns for the Department.

- The inclusion of provisions to increase truck weights raises significant concerns about these trucks' ability to brake, creating unsafe conditions on Minnesota roads. More importantly, the language related to milk trucks eliminates the ability for the State Patrol to conduct civil weight enforcement on these trucks, which is a critical function to ensure safety and preserve Minnesota's transportation investments.
- The Department appreciates the Committee's support of the Minnesota State Patrol's Trooper Academy and our efforts regarding recruitment. The language in the House proposal allows for an increase in cadet wages, but differentiates between our Law Enforcement Training Opportunity program (80 percent of base salary) and traditional cadets (100 percent base salary). The Department prefers that all cadets be treated equally because all cadets meet POST eligibility requirements by the start of an Academy and it will also assist in our recruiting efforts.

The Department remains committed to working with the Transportation Conference Committee to ensure that the Department can continue to meet the needs and expectations of all Minnesotans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ramona L. Dohman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Commissioner Ramona L. Dohman

There are two key investments critical to the Department and the services we provide that were not funded in totality in either bill.

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| DVS | MNLARS Operation Fee | \$16 million/biennium (ongoing \$1 fee) |
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Ongoing MNLARS Operation Funding: The Department of Public Safety is seeking a stable, ongoing funding source for the MNLARS system being completed for all driver and motor vehicle transactions in the state of Minnesota. The MNLARS system replaces the over 30 year old legacy system which was subject to critical operating and security errors. A fee that expired on June 30, 2016 created the budget for development of the new system. The Department seeks to reestablish the \$1 fee on certain driver and vehicle transactions to support the ongoing operation, maintenance, and enhancement of the system, which is the expectation of our stakeholders and the legislature.

The Department of Public Safety began to roll out MNLARS in 2016. No new funds are being collected or requested for development of the system. This operation request is for an ongoing funding source to maintain the system, without which the Department would be limited in its ability for future enhancements requested by stakeholders and the legislature. If an ongoing funding source is not secured and legislative changes that require programming are passed - including the numerous policy provisions in this bill - the Department would have to use MNLARS development dollars to make those changes, leaving the entire project in jeopardy. The Department believes this ongoing funding source is critical for a key backbone system on which the state relies to issue all of the millions of driver licenses and motor vehicle transactions for Minnesotans.

While the Senate did include ongoing funding source for the MNLARS system, the House proposal funded MNLARS operation for one year with funds from the Driver and Vehicle Services Special Revenue Account. This is concerning because ongoing funding is needed for maintenance and support and to fund future enhancements and programming changes. For example, several pieces of legislation being heard this year require funding from these Special Revenue accounts, including provisions contained in this bill and in both the House and Senate REAL ID proposals. The Department is concerned that those accounts cannot support all of those requests in totality.

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| DPS | Operational Increase | \$5.87 million (FY 18)/ \$12.22 million (FY 19) |
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Operational Increase: The Governor included funding in his budget proposal to support the current operations at current levels in the Department of Public Safety. Neither the House nor Senate proposals fully fund this request. Funding for the agency has not kept pace with rising costs, jeopardizing our ability to ensure the Department has enough staff and operating funds to adequately provide the Department's required services and support to all Minnesotans.

Without this funding, the Department will continue to cover these cost increases through additional vacancies and other cost saving measures; however, this will likely result in longer wait times for services, delays in projects, delays in inspections, increased turnaround times, and fewer Troopers on the road in addition to reducing the number of cadets at each State Patrol academy.

Thank you for including funding for the following proposals. These are critical investments needed by the Department to maintain service and meet statutory requirements.

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| State Patrol | Helicopter | \$920,000 (FY 18: one-time General Fund) \$4.83 million (FY 18: one-time THF) |
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State Patrol Helicopter: The Governor included in his budget a helicopter for the State Patrol. This proposal benefits the state of Minnesota and the State Patrol by updating the aviation fleet, making it safer, more reliable, and more efficient. The services provided by the State Patrol are not provided by any other entity or organization in Minnesota, making them critical for the state's public safety.

If this investment is not made, the State Patrol would only have one helicopter that could provide rescue and fire support services. When this helicopter is grounded for maintenance, the State Patrol would not be able to respond to requests for assistance from local agencies in critical times because the other helicopter (34 years old) can no longer provide those critical services. This is a key public safety investment.

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| OTS | MNCrash System Maintenance | \$940,000/biennium (ongoing) |
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MNCrash System Maintenance: Under current statute, the Department is required to publish a summary and analysis of crash records, which informs policy, enforcement, and education decisions statewide. The Department used federal funds to improve the crash records system, which became fully functional for all stakeholders in January 2016. If ongoing funding is not secured, the Department would need to seek a statutory change to no longer provide this information since the current Office of Traffic Safety budget would not cover the cost.

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| DVS | Automated Knowledge Test System Maintenance | \$312,000/biennium (ongoing spending authority out of special revenue account) |
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Ongoing Maintenance of the Driver License Testing System: The Department upgraded the antiquated automated knowledge testing system relied upon all individuals seeking a driver license in Minnesota. This is the system used by the Department to provide the driving knowledge test throughout the state.