

Department of Motor Vehicles
Fiscal Year 2022-23 Budget Hearing
February 15, 2022

Testimony of Mark JF Schroeder, Commissioner

Good afternoon. Thank you, Chairperson Krueger, Chairperson Weinstein, Chairperson Kennedy, Chairperson Magnarelli, and other members of the Legislature for inviting me here today. I am Mark Schroeder, Commissioner of the Department of Motor Vehicles and Chair of the Governor's Traffic Safety Committee.

I want to start again this year by honoring and recognizing the employees of the Department of Motor Vehicles. Perhaps more than most, DMV is the window through which New Yorkers directly interact with their government, and our Motor Vehicle Representatives and Motor Vehicle License Examiners are the primary contact point of those interactions. COVID has foundationally changed the way the DMV does business, and how we interact with our customers. From the early days of the pandemic our employees have adapted to PPE, social distancing, plexiglass, alternative schedules, and other safety protocols. Our

employees have not only met these challenges, but they have exceeded all expectations and continue to provide invaluable service to our customers. I am so incredibly proud of the job they have done, and we will build upon these successes as we move to transform the Department of Motor Vehicles in the way we do business and interact with customers.

Each year the DMV provides services to approximately 15 million New Yorkers through more than 35 million customer interactions. Through its state and county-run issuing offices, Traffic Violation Bureaus, Safety Hearings, and other related activities, the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles collects more than \$2.1 billion in revenue annually.

Governor Hochul's Executive Budget plan provides \$567.5 million for DMV to support its main office in Albany, 29 State operated offices and 93 County operated offices. In January 2022, DMV launched a new Innovation Center here in Albany, where I am sitting right now. Through the lens of our customers, we will use this location to design and test new products and services. This budget will enable us to continue our efforts

to reflect our mission statement and to improve overall customer service, promote traffic safety, and protect consumers.

Additionally, DMV is undertaking a transformation in the way we do business. The COVID-19 pandemic presented many unique challenges for DMV, but it became the catalyst that drove the Department to think bigger about its need for change and new ways of doing business with New Yorkers. DMV's ambitious Transformation effort will seek to modernize not only DMV technology, but also the Department's overall operations and customer service capabilities to provide increased levels of service and satisfaction for New Yorkers and business partners.

In accordance with the Department's new Strategic Plan, DMV Transformation will shatter the perceptions of our customers by providing simplified, effective, and responsive services through the following tenants:

- We will reduce the overall need for customers to interact with the DMV in person.
- We will go to the customer with personalized, curated, and

contextually relevant services.

- We will strive to ensure that the customer is successful in completing their transaction the first time.

More specifically, DMV will engage multiple projects within the following workstreams to accomplish our goals including, but not limited to:

- Expand digital products and services. Including Online Permit capabilities with recent improvements to reduce fraud, as well as, an online transaction for original registrations.
- Provide timely and consistent customer support services for New Yorkers, as well as for our offices and business partners.
- Re-shape the DMV organization to effectively support sustainable services.
- Strengthen the capabilities of our program, project, and change management competencies across the agency to better support both Transformation and day-to-day business.
- Partner with the NYS Office of Information Technology Services to build sustainable and secure next-generation

technology using a "data first" approach, and to retire unsupported and outdated systems as new functionality becomes available.

In order to achieve these lofty goals, Governor Hochul's Executive Budget recommends \$106 million to build a new technology infrastructure including the purchase of hardware, software, and development services. This will allow the department to eventually replace our current legacy systems that are difficult to support and modify, and often restrain the development of new digital offerings. We will also use some of the funding to bring on additional employees to support transformation, like project managers and business analysts.

These changes and others will help DMV effectively face the ongoing challenges of today. Beyond the obstacles presented by COVID-19, DMV continues to face increased federal mandates including the imminent deadline associated with the Federal Real ID Act. Additionally, DMV remains committed to working with our partners in

state government to improve driver safety, deliver secure identity documents, and administer the laws enacted to promote safety and protect consumers.

In accordance with these principles and aligned with the Governor's priorities, DMV will strive to be as open, ethical, and transparent as possible, while protecting the secure data with which we are entrusted. The DMV website serves as the primary tool for public transparency, providing clear and understandable explanations of what are often complicated statutory requirements. The DMV website also offers more targeted transparency tools, like a prominent homepage link to simple instructions on how to submit a Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) request by either email or postal mail, and links to online services or field office locations, as well as DMV statistics regarding driver licenses and vehicle registrations. While the department is constantly updating and improving its website, a comprehensive redesign is planned for 2022 which will result in a more user-friendly and modern site.

In closing, customer service is our guiding principle. With the

improvements already implemented and those we anticipate introducing in the coming year, I am confident 2022 will be a year of accomplishment, advancement, and innovation at the DMV.

Once again, thank you for this opportunity to speak with you today. DMV is committed to operating in a transparent manner that is open and forthright to all New Yorkers. I welcome any questions you might have about DMV and our plans for serving the people of New York.