

Department of Motor Vehicles
Fiscal Year 2021-22 Budget Hearing
January 26, 2021

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 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. COVID has foundationally changed the way the DMV does business, how we are structured, and how we interact with our customers. Our employees have not only met these challenges, they have exceeded all expectations. I am so incredibly proud of the job they have done, and I look forward to the opportunities this year will bring to build upon the successful changes we have made, and to continue to improve and expand our services.

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 Cuomo's executive budget plan provides \$456 million for DMV to support its main office in Albany, 30 State operated offices, and 102 County operated offices, and will enable us to continue our efforts to reflect our mission statement and to improve overall customer service, promote traffic safety, and protect consumers.

During these unprecedented times, DMV will use these funds to continue to transform the way it does business. The COVID-19 pandemic has made clear that providing abundant and user-friendly online transactions is paramount.

Our website received more than 76 million visits over the past year and currently offers nearly 70 online transactions and services. In 2020, in addition to changes that made our web page easier to use, we began the design of a Virtual Office interface

which will allow customers to complete select DMV transactions through a new online process that would have previously required an in-person visit. Other improvements include the use of artificial intelligence and chat bots, allowing members of the public to have their questions asked without having to wait to speak to a DMV agent.

In 2021, DMV will continue to redesign and improve our website and mobile user experience, making it easier for customers to obtain information and complete transactions. In addition, DMV is working to develop additional tools, such as online permit testing, and virtual hearings, that are all aimed to allow customers to interact with DMV without coming to an office.

As I sit here today, I want to assure you that DMV will continue to reimagine, reinvent and improve the way we do business. While we are expanding the channels by which we interact with our customers, we are not eliminating or removing any service channel currently offered. Customers will continue to be able to complete transactions in our offices, by mail, or at one of our kiosks. We are also working to increase the capacity

and capabilities of our call centers to more effectively assist those New Yorkers who prefer not to do their business with us online.

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 closing, customer service is our guiding principle - with the improvements already implemented and those we anticipate introducing in the coming year, I am confident 2021 will be a year of accomplishment, advancement and innovation at the DMV.

Once again, thank you for this opportunity to speak with you today. I welcome any questions you might have about DMV and our plans for serving the people of New York.