

Department of Motor Vehicles  
Fiscal Year 2023-24 Budget Hearing  
Testimony of Mark JF Schroeder, Commissioner

February 6, 2023

Good afternoon. Thank you, Chairpersons Krueger, Weinstein, Kennedy, 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.

When I became Commissioner four years ago, there was no shortage of jokes about the DMV—long lines, slow service, outdated technology. You name it.

So, we embarked on a strategic plan to change how we operate, focused on our customers and employees first and foremost. We updated our vision statement to reflect our goal of shattering perceptions of DMV, and we initiated a variety of transformative projects to make it happen.

As I sit here today, I am so proud to say that our progress has not gone unnoticed. Moreover, because of the foundation we laid during the past few years, we are uniquely positioned to build upon our success in fulfillment of Governor Hochul's proposal to enhance and improve access to state government services.

So, I want to take a moment to share just a few comments we recently received from our customers, and I quote:

- “What an amazing experience! The staff was very kind, welcoming and friendly. Ms. DeJesus (**de-HAY-zoose**) was thorough and friendly.”
- "This was the best DMV experience I've had in 30 years! Travis was amazing, helpful, efficient, and incredibly sensitive."
- “Makes coming to the DMV fun! Great, quick service- had all the answers to my questions and took care of my service efficiently.”

Every day, our customers are reaching out to thank us for the improvements we made. And more than 300 times in the last year we received similar praise from many of you, your staff, and your colleagues in the Legislature. My point is that these comments and so many others like them reflect our ongoing transformation and the commitment of our nearly 3-thousand employees.

Through some of the toughest times our agency, our state and our nation have ever seen, DMV employees have not only overcome challenges and loss, but they have also gone far above and beyond to support the critical functions of our agency and the nearly 16 million New Yorkers who

rely on our services each year.

DMV engages in more than 35 million customer interactions annually and collects approximately \$2 billion in yearly revenue. Governor Hochul's Executive Budget plan provides \$477.6 Million for DMV to support its statewide operations, Traffic Violation Bureaus, and state- and county-operated offices. One of those locations is our Innovation Center in Albany, where I gave my testimony last year. It has become the test lab for groundbreaking products and services, and just a few weeks ago, we opened a satellite innovation center in the Empire State Plaza Concourse to further our goal of meeting customers where **they** are.

We also remain unwavering in our commitment to providing equitable service to residents, and we strive to make sure our workforce and the vendors who support us are as diverse as our customers.

I am thrilled to say that more than sixty percent of our discretionary spending is done through Minority and Women Owned Business Enterprises. And 30 percent is done through Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Businesses, which is five times the amount required by law.

The DMV was also awarded last year for its consistent support of the state's Preferred Source Program, which employs individuals with disabilities through New York State Industries for the Disabled member

agencies.

And this past year, I had the esteemed privilege of presenting the first New Yorkers with state-issued IDs with 'X' gender markers. It was truly an historic moment for the agency, and for New York.

In accordance with the Governor's proposal in her 2022 State of the State address, the DMV and the Department of Corrections and Community Supervision established a process to provide incarcerated individuals with state-issued IDs prior to their release. We know that a valid identity document is critical for finding quality housing and employment, and we are so proud to support this vital project. We are currently operational in 3 facilities with the goal of expanding to 20 facilities this year. We also continue to work with DOCCS to prepare incarcerated individuals for their return to the workforce, including commercial driver education and automotive technology instruction.

The DMV has also proudly been at the forefront of the Governor's decisive actions to address the shortage of truck and bus drivers. Under her leadership, the DMV launched a third-party commercial road test program; expedited the licensing process for qualified drivers; expanded the validity of the Commercial Learner Permit; created resource and study guides; and we are currently working to implement the federal waiver for the 'under the

hood' portion of the road test.

The Governor's budget plan will enable us to continue these important efforts and many others that will improve overall customer service, promote traffic safety, and protect consumers. Among those projects is our expansion of digital services. We now have 74 online transactions, including our very successful online REAL ID pre-screening process. This new service allows customers to come to our offices fully prepared to complete their transaction in one visit. It is just one of many ways we are preparing New Yorkers for the upcoming implementation of the federal REAL ID Act. I also toured 11 airports statewide, to get the word out.

We also expanded touchless payment options both in-person and online, and we created a new online transaction to make it easier and cheaper to request DMV records.

But we are not stopping there. This fiscal year, we expect to roll out a completely redesigned website and a fully revamped MyDMV customer portal. Additionally, DMV is undertaking a transformation of its customer contact center. This initiative will allow DMV's customers to interact with our agency in the way they most prefer—by phone, through live chat, self-service, or email.

To achieve our lofty goals, Governor Hochul's Executive Budget

continues to invest in our new technology infrastructure. This will allow the department to eventually replace hundreds of legacy systems that are difficult to support and modify, and often restrain innovation.

Beyond these operational changes, we also remain committed to improving traffic safety, delivering secure identity documents, and administer the laws you have enacted to promote safety, transparency, and consumer protections. Last year, our field investigators and automotive inspectors conducted 87,000 investigations. We also secured restitution for more than 570 New York motorists. And our driver license document was nationally recognized for its use of cutting-edge security features proven to reduce counterfeiting and prevent identity theft. We are also committed to working with tolling authorities such as the MTA and Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority to ensure that motorists who do not pay their tolls are held accountable.

In closing, I spoke to you last year about DMV's Transformation. I've come to now realize that everything we do at DMV is transformative. Every project we undertake, every engagement we have with the public, and every transaction we complete is truly transformative to the millions of New Yorkers who we serve every year. We have fully embraced being the doorway into State government for most New Yorkers and I'm proud of our

continued success—success we will build upon this coming year.

Once again, thank you for this opportunity to speak with you today. I welcome any questions you have at this time.