



Shenna Bellows
Secretary of State

Department of the Secretary of State

Bureau of Motor Vehicles

Catherine Curtis
Deputy Secretary of State

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Testimony of Shenna Bellows Secretary of State
Department of the Secretary of State

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation

March 28, 2023

In Support of L.D. 259 An Act Making Unified Appropriations and Allocations for the Expenditures of State Government, Highway Fund and Other Funds and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal years Ending June 30, 2023, June 30, 2024 and June 30, 2025

Senator Chipman, Representative Williams, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation, my name is Shenna Bellows, I live in Manchester, and I am the Secretary of State and the state's chief motor vehicles officer. I am here today to present testimony in support of the items presented in the 2024 – 2025 Biennial Budget for the Department of the Secretary of State, Bureau of Motor Vehicles.

The Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV) was established in 1905 to support the safety of our roadways and the public through the administration of laws relating to the operation of motor vehicles. The Bureau has grown considerably over the years having responsibility over licensing and monitoring drivers, renewing licenses and IDs, registering and titling vehicles, licensing driver education schools and instructors, licensing vehicle and trailer dealers and managing all motor carrier programs. The Bureau provides services at the main office in Augusta, 13 branch office locations across the state, and through a suite of online services. Additionally, 516 municipalities and 12 non-governmental agents offer registration services to residents and non-residents of this State.

The bureau will collect approximately \$208 million in highway fund revenue over the 2024 – 2025 biennium.

Our vision is to deliver customer-centered service that are convenient for Mainers, powered by exceptional employees and trusted technologies. As Secretary, one of my primary goals has been to modernize our technology to better serve the people of Maine. We are proud of technology innovations over the last two years like the development and implementation of our online appointment systems to save Mainers time at our branches. The initiatives put forward in this budget proposal will allow us to continue to modernize our technology and services to improve efficiency and truly meet the needs of Mainers today.

Bureau information begins on **page 30** of the **Committee Document**.

Administration – Motor Vehicles 0077:

There are 15 Highway Fund initiatives:

Ref. #93

Initiative: Establishes one Public Relations Specialist position and provides funding for related All Other Costs. The Personal Services request is **\$81,870 in fiscal year 2024 and \$86,097 in fiscal year 2025**. The All Other request is **\$14,042 in fiscal year 2024 and \$5,504 in fiscal year 2025**.

This request establishes one Public Relations Specialist position to provide and ensure all information used by the public on all BMV forms, letters, brochures, pamphlets, signs, telephone recordings and the website is consistent, complete, and up to date. We are aware that our website and the materials we issue could be more user-friendly with simpler, easier-to-understand language and presentation. In a fast-changing environment, it's important that we communicate clearly regarding services, deadlines, legal requirements, and new information. This position will ensure that the public has accurate, timely information about motor vehicle laws, requirements and services.

Ref. #94

Initiative: Provides one-time funding to purchase a truck to transport manufactured license plates from the Plate Shop located in Warren, Maine to the main office, branch offices and municipalities. The All Other request is **\$171,254 in fiscal year 2024**.

The current truck has over 100,000 miles and is 10 years old. The engine needs to be upgraded for heavy loads of plates transported to the main office in Augusta, branch offices statewide and some municipalities.

Ref. #95

Initiative: Provides funding to establish a pilot program to address the shortfall in driver's license examination capacity. The All Other request is **\$67,842 in fiscal year 2024 and \$33,921 in fiscal year 2025**.

Recent updates in federal requirements for commercial driver's license (CDL) testing have also caused an increase in the amount of time required to administer a CDL road test by approximately 50%. This created backlogs in the summer months from which we are only now recovering with collateral consequences to the industries that depend on efficient CDL licensing. The demand on staff is most acute in the six months from April through September, when demand for scheduled exams is greatest and staffing is at its lowest during the summer vacation time frame. The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) has recently approved third-party testing for CDL exams. Third party exams conducted via contracted staff are currently in use in at least 12 states and provides a solution to increasing staffing to meet peak season demand. This pilot proposal will contract three full time equivalent personnel for a six-month period over two summer seasons from April 1, 2023 through September 30, 2024 to assist in meeting peak season needs at three branch offices. This contracted assistance will allow Driver's License Examiners to focus on road evaluations that require greater staff skill to conduct. BMV leadership will provide oversight and evaluation of the contract performance.

Ref. #96

Initiative: Provides one-time funding to translate written driver's license exams into ten additional languages. The All Other request is **\$61,828 in fiscal year 2024**.

Due to the changing demographics of our state, we must adapt to emerging needs. In order to provide adequate services for all eligible Maine drivers, there is a need to provide translated driver's license exams into ten additional languages. Not only will accessibility to translated exams provide greater accessibility for non-native English speakers but also, providing translated exams will reduce the need to have translation on demand services, which are more costly.

Ref. #97

Initiative: Establishes one Senior Motor Vehicle Section Manager position and provides funding for related All Other costs. The Personal Services request is **\$106,870 in fiscal year 2024 and \$112,735 in fiscal year 2025**. The All Other request is **\$14,804 in fiscal year 2024 and \$6,315 in fiscal year 2025**.

In Fiscal Year 2022, the BMV fielded 625,191 incoming telephone calls. In the absence of a contact center, these calls are routed to multiple points of contact, wasting both the customers' and employees' time. We propose to create a contact center at the BMV to centralize to provide a single point of contact for customers with repetitive transactions of medium to low complexity. The creation of a contact center will aid in optimizing the customer experience by reducing wait times, providing flexibility in contact methods, and consistency in the responses provided. We propose to utilize existing resources for the creation of a contact center, including existing telephone systems, workspace, infrastructure and staffing but would need a position to manage the center itself. This initiative would establish one Senior Motor Vehicle Section Manager to manage a newly created contact center to improve the customer experience in getting answers to their questions from the BMV.

Ref. #98

Initiative: Establishes one Motor Vehicle Section Manager position, two Office Specialist I Supervisor positions and one Office Specialist I position and provides funding for related All Other costs. The Personal Services request is **\$335,434 in fiscal year 2024 and \$355,157 in fiscal year 2025**. The All Other request is **\$132,968 in fiscal year 2024 and \$108,957 in fiscal year 2025**.

This initiative is to support staffing and all other requirements for the Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV) to achieve full compliance with the Federal REAL ID Act of 2005 by implementing a software program known as State-to-State. Offered through the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators (AAMVA), State to State ensures communication between states to share driver's license information to provide the open sharing of data regarding driving violations, suspensions, accidents, and related incidents. The Bureau expects a significant increase in workload based on the experiences of 42 other states who have already brought the program online. In order to prepare for success, the Bureau is requesting the creation of four staffing positions to service all aspects of the program including responding to information requests from other states about Maine driving records and identifying and following up with Maine drivers where the system identifies violations from outside the state. Additionally, participating states pay an annual fee of \$29,651 and a per driver fee of \$0.0520.

For Maine's 1,056,533 licensed drivers, the total fee is \$84,590 annually.

Ref. #99

Initiative: Establishes one Office Specialist II position and provides funding for related All Other costs. The Personal Services request is **\$89,957 in fiscal year 2024 and \$95,165 in fiscal year 2025**. The All Other request is **\$12,319 in fiscal year 2024 and \$5,162 in fiscal year 2025**.

As we modernize our technology, the complexity of managing our contacts with technology and software vendors is increasing. A dedicated position is needed to manage logistics and paperwork, track maintenance and software licenses, and maintain and track software and equipment replacement plans. This request establishes one Office Specialist II position for purchasing, gathering budgetary quotes, assembling financial statements and coordinating accounting and general operating activities. This position will assist Information Services with developing budgets and cost analyses and may also be called upon in developing fiscal notes and information for legislation.

Ref. # 100

Initiative: Establishes one Technical Support Specialist position and provides funding for related All Other costs. The Personal Services request is **\$117,048 in fiscal year 2024 and \$123,256 in fiscal year 2025**. The All Other request is **\$15,196 in fiscal year 2024 and \$6,523 in fiscal year 2025**.

This request establishes one Technical Support Specialist position to support systems administration needs across the department and provides associated All Other funding. Currently, a single individual is responsible for all Linux, network, storage and backup systems across the agency. The number of systems is rapidly expanding, and some systems will be moving into cloud-based services. An additional position is needed to handle the load and provide for backup coverage, which is crucial to the smooth operations, business continuity and cybersecurity needs of the Department.

Ref. # 101

Initiative: Establishes one Information System Security Analyst position and provides funding for related All Other costs. The Personal Services request is **\$113,670 in fiscal year 2024 and \$120,068 in fiscal year 2025**. The All Other request is **\$15,093 in fiscal year 2024 and \$6,426 in fiscal year 2025**.

As one of the state bureaus with the responsibility of maintaining extensive personal identifying information for most of the residents of this state, ensuring we have adequate cybersecurity staff is paramount. This request establishes one Information System Security Analyst position to provide daily monitoring of system security, development of cybersecurity procedures, and administration of security related systems and services, to improve the cybersecurity position of the department as the complexity and number of systems and online services supported by the department continue to grow and cybersecurity threats evolve.

Ref. #102

Initiative: Provides funding for repayment of Certificate of Participation loan principal and interest for customer services and information systems ongoing modernization projects. The All Other request is **\$761,327 in fiscal year 2024 and \$1,203,959 in fiscal year 2025.**

A crucial part of technology modernization is ensuring that our backend systems including storage and backups are current. This initiative provides a sustainable funding mechanism to engage in a well-planned and overdue replacement of systems and equipment that serve as the backbone of our license and registration systems. Until we replace this critical yet outdated backbone of our system, our ability to improve the customer-facing functionality is limited. The initiative provides funding for repayment of Certificate of Participation loan principal and interest for customer services and information systems ongoing modernization projects.

Ref. #103

Initiative: Provides funding for the increase in monthly fee and mileage rate for state vehicle leases. The All Other request is **\$37,650 in fiscal year 2024 and \$62,624 in fiscal year 2025.**

Central Fleet Management leasing and fuel costs will be increasing. These costs are passed on to agencies leasing vehicles.

Ref. #104

Initiative: Establishes two Programmer Analyst positions and two Computer Programmer positions and provides funding for related All Other costs. The Personal Services request is **\$397,336 in fiscal year 2024 and \$419,680 in fiscal year 2025.** The All Other request is **\$58,626 in fiscal year 2024 and \$23,581 in fiscal year 2025.**

This request establishes two Programmer Analyst positions and two Computer Programmer positions to provide for the ongoing development, maintenance, and support of modernized applications for the Bureau of Motor Vehicles and provides associated All Other funding. The continued modernization effort includes new interfaces for Electronic Lien Titling (ELT) and State to State, as well as implementing new technologies and services using modern development practices and security best practices for application development. These positions support improving the security posture of bureau applications, their sustainability, and scalability and will be instrumental in developing and implementing interfaces with municipalities and the public to process transactions.

Ref. #105

Initiative: Establishes one Information System Support Specialist position and one Technical Support Specialist position and provides funding for related All Other costs. The Personal Services request is **\$210,939 in fiscal year 2025.** The All Other request is **\$23,098 in fiscal year 2025.**

This request establishes one Information System Support Specialist position and one Technical Support Specialist position for account creation, maintenance, phone support, email requests, and remote assistance to help with user computer and system issues. As part of the modernization projects, the Department is strengthening cybersecurity protections including authentication methods to log into applications and centralizing control to add, update, disable, or delete user accounts. This will require more helpdesk assistance for application users and increased demands upon the BMV as we roll out new authentication requirements to the

branches and municipalities. These positions will also support the onboarding and training of personnel on new systems.

Ref. #106

Initiative: Establishes two Customer Representative Associate II - Motor Vehicle positions to serve customers in branch offices. The Personal Services request is **\$148,958 in fiscal year 2024 and \$158,010 in fiscal year 2025**. The All Other request is **\$27,636 in fiscal year 2024 and \$10,575 in fiscal year 2025**.

Staffing levels at the branch offices are inadequate to serve the number of customers who utilize the office services in a timely manner. In the last year, we saw a 22% increase in the amount of people seeking services from our branches. This has exacerbated wait times and has resulted in frustration for customers as well as front line staff. To provide a short-term solution to critical staffing shortages, staff are being temporarily assigned to different branch offices, resulting in additional expense due to travel reimbursement and staff having lost time while traveling. These wait times can be decreased with the addition of staff at the branch offices experiencing the highest volume of customers.

Ref. #107

Initiative: Establishes one Driver License Examiner position and provides funding for related All Other costs. The Personal Services request is **\$79,165 in fiscal year 2024 and \$83,904 in fiscal year 2025**. The All Other request is **\$10,818 in fiscal year 2024 and \$4,879 in fiscal year 2025**.

The new Federal Commercial Driver License (CDL) mandate extends the duration of a CDL road exam by 50%. Additionally, there has been an increasing demand for driver's licenses, resulting in an additional workload for the License Examination staff in the field. The addition of one Driver License Examiner position will aid in reducing delays in exam delivery time frames by provide for more opportunities for customers to take their exams.

This concludes my testimony on the items included the Governor's proposed 2024-2025 Biennial budget.

I would be happy to answer questions now or at the work session. Thank you for your consideration.