

Kurt Osgood
Holden

To whom it may concern,

I support vehicle inspections being eliminated on all non-commercial motor vehicles. Our inspection laws do not keep up with current vehicle technology, and hurt the people of our state, particularly those of lower income.

Current inspections typically cost \$12.50. The shop doing the inspection is required to take a fair amount of time to properly do an inspection per the Maine inspection manual. The \$12.50 does NOT cover the costs to do that inspection, which includes placing a vehicle on a lift, testing and inspecting all suspension components (this is 5 pages for a class A in the inspection manual, and requires 2 people for the methods described,) hydraulic and emergency braking components, electrical systems, exhaust, indicators and lights, headlight brightness and aim, tires, registrations, and much more. The shop will actually lose money by passing a vehicle without doing any additional work. Giving any lenience on a part that should be fine introduces liability and the possibility of losing their license. This is not fair on our shops or car owners. This does not make passing a mandatory yearly test easy, and also sets up a system for predatory failure since the same person doing the inspection can benefit from failing that inspection. We have put the fox in charge of the henhouse. This is particularly hard on the people who do not have as much money, as they tend to have older vehicles that are out of any warranty and cannot afford another vehicle. We all know how hard it is to deal without a car in many parts of Maine, where the nearest store may be 20+ minutes away by driving.

As far as safety is concerned, the inspections do not statistically improve safety. A study by BYU found inspections made little difference, and many states have already removed them. Most of Canada also does not require any periodic safety inspections. We even had a time this past summer that we did not have inspections enforced. The argument that our salt is the issue does not hold muster to me. Many other states and Canada have the same adverse weather without inspections, and other products are now available that are much less corrosive such as beet juice used in several other states and also in Canada. The additional expense to use those products is far less than the damage caused to vehicles by excessive salt usage.

Inspections also only provide a snapshot. I, and I'm sure many others, have had critical components go bad in between inspections. The yearly inspection does not prevent parts from going bad, and only identifies potential issues. Those issues would typically be noticed by a driver, or by those doing the normal car maintenance. Most problems in modern cars will make noise or noticeable handling changes long before a safety issue arises. If a person is not capable of maintaining and checking their own vehicle, they will need to have it serviced anyways. They can opt to have a check done then, as a shop will typically not let a vehicle go to a customer without making sure it is safe (it is both a liability and an opportunity for additional work for them.) If an owner does not maintain a vehicle, the motor will not last long, so other issues won't matter. A common phrase I hear from some of my mechanic friends is 'If you had seen what I had.' The problem is that if that mechanic is seeing it, the vehicle has already been on the road driving. The inspection did not stop the owner from driving the car or truck up until they arrived. Them not passing it does not mean the owner will not take it somewhere else with the hopes of finding the mechanic that will ignore it. It also does not address the fact that a vehicle that is unsafe at 70 in a snowstorm may be fine on a sunny day doing 35.

Inspections also do not figure in the safety features added to many modern cars. Brake pad sensors, dual reservoir brake systems, rust resistant coatings, and tire pressure and/or diameter monitoring all factor in to safer cars that don't need inspections beyond what should be done with the normal maintenance. This is why vehicle safety keeps climbing. Inspections do not take any account for these changes.

Inspections also make a safety or compliance dilemma. Myself and most have my

family have, at some point, faced a situation where we have had to choose to take an inspected vehicle with a defect that made them feel unsafe over an uninspected vehicle that was safer, but did not pass inspection, while getting parts or awaiting repairs. We could not afford to keep extra inspected vehicles around, nor get a rental. The people who really don't want to deal with inspections typically find someone who will not perform an inspection, but will give a sticker. If the vehicle is old enough, they will register as antique which does not require inspections to bypass the rules. Sometimes they will slash the sticker and cut out a new month so they can run it until they are noticed. This leaves those of us who want to be safe and in compliance stuck in the lurch, without really helping safety.

Finally, not having inspections does not mean a vehicle cannot be required to be safe. Our police officers should have the authority to pull over and require repair of an unsafe vehicle. Owners can be made to be held responsible if they cause an accident due to negligence in vehicle safety. These can be better addressed than our current, broken, inspection situation. Please consider this measure to make our wonderful state a little easier to live in for all of us.

Thank you for taking the time to read this. I know this has come up several times in the past, but hopefully it is passed this time around.