

Department of Motor Vehicles

FY 2016 Budget Hearing

November 19, 2014

Testimony of Barbara Fiala, Commissioner

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Good Morning. I am Barbara Fiala, the Commissioner of the Department of Motor Vehicles. I'm excited to have this opportunity to showcase some of the truly innovative accomplishments DMV has recently achieved. While there is certainly much more to do, I think you'll see that DMV is realizing the Governor's vision of a smarter, more effective state government.

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In today's presentation I'll be focusing on three key areas in which we have been making great progress: 1) Using technology and social media to improve customer services 2) Working with other Agencies to reduce waste and improve services to New Yorkers, and 3) Traffic Safety which is at the core of our Mission. As you will see in the presentation that follows, today's DMV is not the same old DMV.

DMV's mission is to issue secure identity documents, deliver essential motor vehicle and driver related services, and administer motor vehicle laws enacted to promote safety and protect consumers. Our vision is to be a national leader in providing efficient, innovative and responsive government services. For many, DMV is the face of State government. We perform more than 28 million transactions each year, serving over 10 million New Yorkers and collecting over \$1.7 billion in revenue for the State. Our focus over the last two years has been our Customer Service Initiative, which is revolutionizing the way DMV provides its services, making it faster, easier, and more convenient.

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In 2012 Governor Cuomo tasked me with reviewing DMV practices and modernizing them to improve the way we do business. The Customer Service Initiative sets out to provide better services to our customers who come into our offices and allow more utility by way of alternative delivery channels such as computers, smart phones, and self-service KIOSK, DMV has adapted the use of the latest technology to improve the customer service we provide to New Yorkers.

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This began with a redesign of the DMV website. As you can see from the graphic (Show DMV Homepage)

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DMV not only has a presence on Youtube, but also uses other social media sites like

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Twitter,

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Facebook, and

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Flick'r to communicate with customers. (Commissioner will pause after each so that homepage of each can be shown).

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In addition to social media, DMV has redesigned its website to include easy to follow instructions, making it easier for our customers to find information, process transactions, and make a reservation at any of the State operated DMV locations.

Currently, there are dozens of services and transactions that can be processed online. Our most popular transactions have been optimized for use on smart phones and tablets. We are always searching for new and innovative ways to use these technologies to provide fast, easy and convenient services to our customers.

Over the next year we will be working to improve and expand our E-Z Visit option. E-Z visit allows customers to complete the application online, print the barcode provided from our website and bring that along with the supporting documentation to the DMV office. Once there, our MVR can scan the barcode, check the appropriate supporting documents, take any payments, and complete the transaction in a fraction of the time. E-Z visit is available for most passenger registrations. There are currently 3,000 customers a month who use this service. DMV is working toward expanding this service to license transactions in the spring.

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Our personalized MyDMV site has been very popular with nearly 1 million New Yorkers having enrolled since the site was launched in 2010. MyDMV allows customers to manage their vehicle registrations, check the status of their driver license, or complete certain transactions online that require additional security like making an address change. Enrolling in MyDMV is very easy and requires only about 5 minutes to complete if you have your license or ID card handy and access to your email.

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By utilizing a MyDMV account drivers can check the expiration dates of all of their vehicles at one time in a single locations

Slide (12)

The MyDMV account also allows drivers to check the current status of their licenses including current restrictions and expiration dates.

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One of the ways we are better serving our customers is by allowing them to sign up for text message and email reminders to renew their driver's license, registration, and vehicle inspections.

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With this program, New Yorkers will receive electronic reminders when their documents are about to expire. We encourage our customers who do renew via electronic delivery channels to use this option as it takes less time, is better for the environment and reduces costs to the State. Over the next several years we plan on communicating more and more through electronic means and less using traditional mail.

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All of these improvements have allowed us to continue to grow the number of transactions that are completed online – resulting in steady growth year-to-year as shown in this chart (move chart to after notification slides). In fiscal year 13-14 DMV processed over 5 million transactions via our web site.

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While many transactions are available online, some still require an in-person visit. Original registrations, learner's permits, and certain license transactions are among some that do require an office visit so that we can ensure all applicable rules and laws are being followed, and to help prevent identity theft and consumer frauds. For these customers, DMV has recently introduced an online reservation system.

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Reservation Video Clip

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As outlined in the video clip we just watched, the system saves New Yorkers from having to wait in our offices. Since this system went online in January, over a quarter of a million customers have used this system, and we expect this number to continue to grow.

The same system that manages the reservations is also used in each of the 27 offices the State operates to manage walk-in customer flow. This customer queuing system is a customer service friendly way that DMV can manage workflow and provide high quality service to our customers. By selecting a button corresponding to the type of transaction they wish to complete, the customer's transaction is entered into their appropriate queue. This information is used by office management to ensure the best possible staffing for each queue, thus reducing overall wait times in our offices.

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Many customers enter our offices without first checking our website. Often these customers have relatively simple transactions that can be processed with little or no assistance from DMV staff. It is for these customers that DMV rolled out self-service KIOSKS in 2013. There are currently 25 of these machines in 19 of the State run offices that process 1,300 transactions daily. Currently, customers can process registration, license and Non driver ID renewals, request duplicate registrations, driver's abstracts, and process address changes. We will be adding driver responsibility assessments payments, and license plate surrenders in the coming months. The addition of these transactions will provide tremendous value to customers who have come into our offices.

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In addition to the reservations system and self-service KIOSKS, DMV has also deployed motor vehicle representatives from behind the counter to the front door to provide valuable assistance

before a customer begins his or her wait. These greeters review a customer's paperwork to verify that they are prepared, look up their record to ensure there are no restrictions, suspensions, or other blocks that will prevent the customer from completing their transaction, and direct customers to the most efficient means for processing their transactions.

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Another efficiency created by using technology is the shift away from written knowledge tests to automated test stations. This was first introduced as a way to make the CDL knowledge test less onerous. Now DMV is beginning to expand the basic written tests for class D licenses to the automated platform. This automated platform reduces wait time for those taking the test and makes the grading and the overall administration of the test less time consuming. To date, over 200,000 tests have been given by using this new platform. We expect to have both testing systems implemented statewide in the coming year, thus providing efficiencies in Our state and county offices/

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The culmination of each of these in office advancements came to fruition in April 2014 when DMV opened our newest office in Manhattan. The need to relocate this office gave DMV a tremendous opportunity. DMV partnered with the design consultant, IDEO, who volunteered their services, to redesign an office built around the needs of the customer. The redesigned customer flow patterns, easy to understand signing, new queuing system, self-service stations, greeters, and other changes in design allow DMV to give the customers a unique, pleasant and, efficient office experience.

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Mid-Town Manhattan Office Video

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DMV will continue to integrate many of these changes in all of our offices, as feasible, in order to provide the best experience possible for our customers.

Since its inception, the DMV call center has strived to provide quality customer service. The call center has also struggled to keep up with demand. For years, many customers did not get served simply because limitation on the phone lines made it impossible for the call to go through.

Advances in telecommunications have allowed DMV to overcome many of the barriers we faced in the past. In July, DMV entered into a new contract with Verizon that allows DMV to take nearly 4.5 million calls annually. Using updated switches and servers, more calls are getting to our operators, and on-hold times are significantly reduced. We look forward to finishing the conversion to the new system in our prisoner operator call centers during this calendar year. In addition to these upgrades, we have added a “call back” option for customers. Instead of waiting on hold, a caller can leave their name and number and a representative calls back with 15 minutes.

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Historically, the one aspect of the driver’s license renewal that brings customers into our offices is the vision screening. In order to allow customers greater flexibility to renew their licenses, DMV has partnered with vision care providers to use technology to develop a one of a kind program.

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As of now there are 1,225 business enrolled in the registry providing over 100,000 vision screenings. We anticipate the desire for our customers to renew on line or by mail to drive these numbers higher as the program matures.

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The end results of these initiatives are increased traffic on our website and other alternative service delivery channels. .

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With more traffic going to the web and streamlined processes in our offices customers have experienced decreases wait times in our offices and an overall increase in customer satisfaction.

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Partnering with other Agencies

For many years, DMV have partnered with The Department of Corrections and Community Supervision to manufacture our license plates in Auburn and run two call centers in Greene and Bedford Hills Correctional Facilities. We also work with Tax & Finance and DOT on commercial registrations and apportionment. DMV has partnered with DOH on organ donation and has registered 217,000 donors. DMV is also working with board of elections to make it easier to register to vote while at DMV.

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DMV is actively working to electronically route all voter registration applications we receive from our customers to the appropriate County Board of Elections (BOEs) for processing. This heavily paper bound process has long been in need of modernization and we have funded the changes the County BOE vendors need to make to accept electronic transmission. The counties that have already converted, including all NYC counties, have embraced the efficiencies electronic transmission provides.

We expect to have all counties converted by the end of the Fiscal Year when we cease sending applications to them in paper. This will save DMV paper, printing and mailing costs, reduce data entry needs at the County BOEs, and result in faster receipt of the voter registration applications at the BOEs.

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DMV has also recently partnered with DEC and Parks and Recreation to add “adventurer indicators” on New York driver’s licenses. For those driver’s license and non-driver ID holders who also hold a lifetime license to hunt, fish, bow hunt, trap game, have muzzle loading privileges, hold a boating safety certificate, or have a lifetime Empire Passport to New York State Parks, a special icon can be added to the license or ID card denoting the privilege in New York State. This collaboration allows New Yorkers to hold evidence of these privilege on the same document that generally serves as their primary proof of identification. Since we began to offer these licenses in February, DMV as issued 7 thousand adventurer licenses and ID documents with many having more than one indicator.

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In addition to specialized license documents, these same New Yorkers who hold lifetime sporting license and park passes may also purchase one of 9 adventurer license plates for their vehicle. The “I love New York fishing, hunting, and parks plate” may be obtained at no cost to those who purchased their Lifetime Sporting / Recreational License or Lifetime Empire Passport between January 1, 2014 and December 31, 2014. Only one set of plates at no cost is permitted per Lifetime Sporting / Recreational License or Lifetime Empire Passport purchased. Additional plates may be purchased at a cost of \$25.00. In addition to your standard annual registration fees, every two year renewal of the I LOVE NY Adventure Custom Plate will include a \$30.00 “I LOVE NY” fee that is collected on behalf of the NYS Department of Economic Development and used to promote tourism in New York State. This \$30.00 fee will be waived for your first renewal but will be required for each subsequent renewal. These plates are also available to existing lifetime license holders and annual license holders at discounted or full price depending on the license.

Both the plates and the licenses can be obtained through DMV, DEC, or through the Parks Department.

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Information on these and other licenses can be found on a single New York State Website at www.Licensecenter.ny.gov. (show website home page w/ adventure license promo).

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DMV has also had a long standing relationship with OGS and Department of State in producing ID card for state employees and professional occupation cards for realtors, asbestos removers, security guards, dental hygienists, and others. DMV will be expanding these partnerships to include funeral directors and issuing State Park passes on behalf of the Parks Department. These cards will be produced in the same secure facility in Albany that produces driver's licenses and non-driver IDs.

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Recent legislation has DMV partnering with Veteran's Affairs to indicate veteran's status on the top of the driver's license. Men and women who have served can bring their discharge documents to a DMV office and have the word "Veteran" printed on the top of their document. A recent amendment to this law also allows veterans to have this done at no additional cost to them.

Having seen the many benefits of such interagency collaborations for many years, DMV is always open to pursuing mutually beneficial relationships.

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Transportation and Driver Safety

As Commissioner of the Department of Motor Vehicles, I also chair the Governor's Traffic Safety Committee (GTSC), which administers the distribution of federal funds to support and promote the State's highway safety programs.

One of the biggest issues that we are currently facing is distracted driving.

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According to Merriam Webster, to "distract" is "to draw or direct ones attention to a different object or in different directions at the same time." When a driver's attention is drawn away from the task of driving in a safe and defensive manner it is considered "distracted driving." These distractions can be personal, external or internal.

Personal distractions can occur when the driver is daydreaming, is tired or engaging in unsafe practices like reading, writing, shaving, applying makeup or using electronic devices such as computers, cell phones, iPods or GPS navigation systems. Internal distractions occur inside the car, caused by passengers, animals or objects inside the vehicle. External distractions occur outside the car like other motorists, inclement weather, deteriorated road conditions, or even the scenery.

When these distractions occur behind the wheel of a motor vehicle the consequences can be far reaching or even deadly. In recent years, the most frequent form of distraction while driving has been due to cell phone use and texting.

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(Show Texting PSA)

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New York prohibits all drivers from using portable electronic devices while driving.

Illegal activity includes holding a portable electronic device and:

- Talking on a handheld mobile telephone
- Composing, sending, reading, accessing, browsing, transmitting, saving, or retrieving electronic data such as e-mail, text messages, or webpages
- Viewing, taking, or transmitting images
- Playing games

There are a few exceptions to the law prohibiting a driver from using a portable electronic device, which include:

- When the driver uses a hands-free mobile telephone, which allows the user to communicate without the use of either hand.
- Using a handheld electronic device that is affixed to a vehicle surface.
- Using a GPS device that is attached to the vehicle.
- When the purpose of the phone call is to communicate an emergency to a police or fire department, a hospital or physician's office, or an ambulance corps.
- When operating an authorized emergency vehicle in the performance of official duties.

The penalty for a violation of this law shall be 5 driver violation points and a fine. This is a primary law, which means an officer may stop you if you are observed using a hand held device. It is illegal for drivers to use handheld electronic devices while their vehicle is in motion.

On November 1, 2014, changes to the cell phone/texting laws for drivers with a probationary license, Class DJ, Class MJ or a learner permit took effect.

- A conviction will result in a mandatory 120-day driver license or permit suspension.

- Subsequent convictions within six months of a license restoration will result in a revocation of at least one year of a probationary license, junior license or learner permit.
- Maximum fines for cell phone and/or texting use while driving will increase:
- For a first offense, the fine will be \$50 to \$200
- For a second offense committed within 18 months, \$50 to \$250
- For a third or subsequent offense committed within 18 months, \$50 to \$450

A new campaign designed to remind motorists of the dangers of texting and driving was created and run in 2014. The campaign, “Smart Phone. Dumb Choice” encourages motorists to refrain from texting and driving. We are hopeful that these stricter penalties, along with continuing ad campaigns will reduce the number of crashes and fatalities caused by improper cell phone use.

The Governor’s Traffic Safety Committee provides grant funding to law enforcement agencies statewide to enforce NY’s distracted driving laws. Nearly 300,000 tickets are written annually in NY for cell phone and/or texting violations. GTSC also finances a program that brings distracted driving crash survivor Jacy Good in front of judges, law enforcement, prosecutors and high school students to speak about the tragic consequences of driving distracted. Jacy lost both her parents in a distracted driving crash on their drive back home from her college graduation ceremony, and left Jacy with a 10 % chance of living. We will continue to finance this cause whenever and wherever possible.

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Drowsy Driving

Another problem area GTSC is focusing on, especially this time of year is drowsy driving. When you are behind the wheel of a car, being sleepy is dangerous. Although most people know how dangerous drinking and driving is, they may not fully realize that drowsy driving can be just as fatal as driving drunk. Like drugs or alcohol, sleepiness slows reaction time, decreases awareness, impairs judgment and increases your risk of a crash. However, it's difficult to attribute crashes to sleepiness because there is no standardized test for drowsiness, as there is for

intoxication. This lack of standard criteria for determining when a driver is sleepy may be one reason there is little or no police training in identifying drowsiness as a crash factor.

Each year in NYS approximately, 2,800 people are involved in police reported crashes where "fatigued or fell asleep" was listed as a contributing factor in the crash report. About fifty percent of the crashes occur between 11:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m. Sixteen to twenty-four year old male drivers have the highest fatigue related motor vehicle crash rates. This type of crash often results in tragic consequences resulting in serious or fatal injuries.

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Pedestrian Safety

New York State averages nearly 300 pedestrian fatalities annually. The GTSC supports efforts to prevent pedestrian crashes, including pedestrian enforcement efforts in targeted high risk areas that focus on both motorists and pedestrians. Responsibility for addressing pedestrian, bicycle and wheel sport safety issues is shared among several agencies in New York and effective solutions to these issues often require collaborative efforts involving education, engineering and enforcement countermeasures.

Several communities around the state are addressing pedestrian high-crash locations thorough the implementation of campaigns to educate pedestrians and motorists and to actively enforce traffic laws at targeted locations. Communities are creating program to address specific problem locations by using the "See and Be Seen" materials to inform and educate both pedestrians and drivers and by having local police enforce vehicle and traffic laws.

The GTSC partnered with the NYS Department of Health, the NYS Department of Transportation and local law enforcement agencies to highlight high crash pedestrian corridors in NYS and to implement education, enforcement and engineering countermeasures in an effort to

reduce crashes along these stretches of roadway. The Central Avenue project in Albany, NY was very successful and has become a model program.

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Impaired Driving

The GTSC is leading the fight against impaired driving in New York State. GTSC oversees the STOP DWI Program. STOP-DWI stands for “Special Traffic Options Program for Driving While Intoxicated” and is a statewide initiative funded wholly by fines collected from convicted drivers and which has received Presidential and Congressional recognition for its innovative, self-sufficient approach. New York’s STOP-DWI program is the nation’s first and to date, only self-sustaining impaired driving program. Other states have implemented components of self-sufficiency, but none to the degree of New York State. Individually and collectively, the county coordinators carry out their statutory mandate to reduce the incidence of deaths and injuries caused by drunk and/or drug-impaired drivers through the development and administration of plans combining strategies for increased enforcement, prosecution, adjudication, probation, rehabilitation, education, and public information.

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The STOP-DWI Association provides a forum for the exchange of ideas as well as the creation, development and administration of new and innovative approaches for dealing with the drinking and/or drug-impaired driver. It also serves as a vehicle to advocate for public policy to further the goals of the NYS STOP-DWI Program.

The Association acts as a resource to the county programs by providing a website and Facebook page as well as establishing list serves for county coordinators and county prosecutors to facilitate real-time communication regarding legal strategies and best practices. In addition, the Association member dues help to provide school and community groups with cutting-edge educational materials through their website including a Vimeo channel with videos and public service announcements, Power Point presentations and access to the latest research in the field.

(Slide 44) Show have a plan app

The New York State Governors Traffic Safety Committee and the NYS STOP-DWI Foundation recently released the “Have A Plan” mobile app. This app provides users with a timely and convenient resource that enables the user to locate and call a taxi service, program a designated-driver list, educate yourself on Blood Alcohol Content levels as well as information on DWI laws and penalties or even report a suspected impaired driver. This App is available for Apple, Droid, and Windows smart phones.

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In September of 2012, the DMV implemented stronger and stricter regulations relating to relicensing drivers after revocation for alcohol and drug related convictions. Through October of 2014, over 7,300 applicants have been effected by these regulations. 6,490 applicants have been denied relicensing and 836 have been approved with ignition interlock and/ or other driving restrictions.

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In addition to these programs the GTSC has also

- Awarded traffic safety grants to 544 entities totaling nearly \$32 million.
- provided grant funding to develop software which is loaded onto a tablet computer, in addition to a web application, to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of drug recognition evaluations by the state’s 180 trained drug Recognition Experts (DRE’s). The application allows the state’s DRE Coordinator to better administer the statewide program and allows for the data in the system to be queried. Since inception, the tablets have received glowing remarks from users and administrators and New York has received inquiries from over 10 states looking to utilize the new system in their state.

- Coordinated a multi-agency Driver Education Workgroup in partnership with the Driver Education Research and Innovation Center (DERIC) to develop and evaluate new driver education modules to improve New York's driver education guidelines, standards and curriculum. The following modules have been completed: Distracted Driving, Speed, Signs and Signals and Occupant Protection.
- supported a Drug Recognition Expert training class which added 22 officers to the state's cadre of certified DREs for a total of 200. In addition, over 300 officers completed Advanced Roadside Impaired driving Enforcement (ARIDE)
- continues to participate with the National Safety Council and the Allstate Foundation in a teen driver coalition aimed at educating teens and their parents on New York's Graduated Driver's License laws and to stress the importance of parental involvement with their teen's driving.

GTSC also utilized grant funding from the FORD Driving Skills For Life program to coordinate "Battle of the Belt" competitions in Orleans and Suffolk County to raise awareness about the importance of seat belt use. The Battle of the Belt Competition is a fun way to educate motorists about the importance of buckling up.

I am very proud of the work the GTSC does in reducing the many dangers facing drivers today.

Again, thank you for your time today and I am happy to take your questions.