

Department of Motor Vehicles
Fiscal Year 2014-15 Budget Hearing
January 30, 2014

Testimony of Barbara Fiala, Commissioner

Good Afternoon. Thank you Chairperson DeFrancisco, Chairperson Farrell, Assembly member Gantt, Senator Robach and other members of the Legislature for inviting me here today. I am Barbara Fiala, the Commissioner of the Department of Motor Vehicles. I am pleased to have the opportunity to address you and answer any questions you may have regarding the Department of Motor Vehicles and the Fiscal Year 2014-15 Executive Budget as it applies to our agency.

Governor Cuomo's Executive Budget Plan allows DMV to build on the progress made over the past three years. It provides \$318 million for DMV, which will enable us to continue our efforts to improve overall customer service, promote traffic safety and protect consumers.

For Fiscal Year 2014-15, revenue collections from all transactions are projected to total more than \$1.7 billion. We will perform more than 28 million transactions, including over 5 million internet transactions; many completed through MyDMV – DMV's personalized web portal.

Over the past three years, DMV has continued our efforts to make New York State's roadways among the safest in the nation. In 2013, new laws to address distracted driving have resulted in over 207,000 tickets issued for cell phone violations and over 55,000 tickets issued for texting while driving. In addition to implementing legislation that imposes tougher penalties on distract driving, the Department has promulgated regulations establishing stringent review standards for those whose license has been revoked for multiple alcohol and/or drug related driving convictions. DMV has also imposed ignition interlock device requirement for those

drivers being relicensed who have multiple chemical test refusals or alcohol and/or drug related driving convictions on their driving histories.

DMV has also focused upon improving customer service by modernizing our computer systems and other technologies, and providing increased options for customers to complete transactions online. We also developed an online and in-office automated process for voter registration, making it easier and more convenient for the citizens of this state to register to vote.

The DMV website receives more than 14 million hits per year. To improve our service, DMV will soon be launching a new modern, dynamic, and easy to use website that will also allow access via mobile devices, including smart phones and tablets, helping to eliminate the need for hundreds of thousands of office visits and calls each year.

In conjunction with the new website, we have implemented a Vision Registry that partners with more than 1,000 pharmacies, grocery chains, American Automobile Association outlets, local opticians and other private sector businesses. The Vision Registry allows the mandatory vision screening to be performed outside of a DMV office and have the results posted to the motorist's license record in real time, giving customers the convenience of performing a license renewal transaction online rather than having to visit an office.

In addition to the Department's new web-based systems, our traditional office operations are being made more customer friendly. New queuing systems have now been installed in all State issuing offices to more efficiently manage customer flow. This new system also allows customers to go online to make reservations and then show up at the scheduled time, eliminating prolonged wait times for our customers. The reservation system is now available in all 27 state operated DMV offices.

We have also installed 24 kiosks in our downstate offices, including one which is available outside normal DMV business hours in the Atlantic Center Mall in Brooklyn. Currently, our kiosks enable customers to renew or replace their driver license or vehicle registration, order driver's license abstracts, change their address and register to vote. To date,

more than 155,000 transactions have been processed on our kiosks. In the coming fiscal year, we will be adding additional kiosk transactions.

DMV also piloted expanded office hours and Saturday hours during the past year. Based upon the success of the expanded hours pilot, DMV will continue to offer expanded office hours in three offices, Yonkers, Herald Square and Massapequa from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

A cornerstone of our customer service initiatives is our Customer Service Training program. This program will result in a comprehensive training curriculum utilizing best practices from the private sector that will be integrated into all DMV functions. This training began in September 2013, and will continue to evolve and result in continuous training for all employees to keep premier customer service a primary focus of DMV.

The DMV is also partnering with The Department of Environmental Conservation and Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historical Preservation to issue Adventure licenses, so New Yorkers will be able to carry a single document that shows proof of their driving privileges and recreational and sporting licenses, permits, and certificates.

To better prepare New York to cope with emergencies, DMV is also partnering with the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Corrections and Community Supervision to issue Emergency Management plates to clearly identify first responders and other emergency personnel.

Through the Governor's Traffic Safety Committee, DMV will continue its outstanding traffic safety initiatives that have made New York's roadways among the safest in the nation. DMV will receive more than \$39 million in federal funding. In addition, we will continue activities designed to crackdown on impaired driving, the enforcement of laws against texting and cell phone use, as well as continuing to promote seat belt and car seat usage. As part of his Executive Budget proposal announced last week, the Governor has proposed tough new legislation on these issues, which would increase sanctions imposed against drivers who pose the

greatest highway safety risks -- recidivist drunk drivers and young people who continue to text while driving.

Moving forward, DMV will continue to be innovative; striving to redesign and realign our procedures to maintain a high level of customer service. We remain strongly committed to our core mission to serve the citizens of New York.

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