



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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Good afternoon, Chairman Hennessey, Chairman Carroll, and members of the committee. My name is Stephen Madrak, and I am the Director of the Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV) at the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation. On behalf of Secretary Yassmin Gramian, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the vehicle titling and registration process and on the proposed legislation contained in HB 2638. While PennDOT understands the intent behind this legislation, we feel that it is duplicative of current processes that PennDOT has in place and does not account for unusual circumstances or complex transactions that may extend the time needed for those processes.

To provide some perspective on PennDOT's motor vehicle operations, PennDOT manages the issuance of the state's more than 12.1 million vehicle registrations, and the process to obtain a title or registration can be done either at PennDOT's Riverfront Office Center or through one of the over 5,500 third-party agents throughout the state. In most cases, an individual will need the services of an authorized PennDOT agent or BMV to assist them in obtaining or transferring the title or registering their vehicle.

Within BMV, there are several operating units. The Data Entry and Examination (DEX) unit processes the titling and registration paperwork received from customers and agents. In July alone, these units processed approximately 95,000 transactions. In addition to these transactions, the DEX staff processes specialty work such as school bus, emergency vehicles, salvages titles, crushed vehicles, abandoned mobile homes, legislative work, and Commonwealth vehicles, while also working directly with customers. Supervisory staff is assigned quality control (QC) oversight of applications processed by staff. If errors are found, a full review of the processor's work is completed.

From January 1 through July 31 of 2022, the BMV DEX unit processed approximately 649,000 transactions, with a current turnaround time for title work of 23 days, from the date received until it is back in the mail to the customer. For title maintenance (including registration work like replacing an illegible license plate) the turnaround time is currently nine days. In calendar year 2021, the BMV DEX units processed 1.11 million transactions.

If titling or registration paperwork is sent back to the DEX unit by customers or agents due to errors or missing documentation, the Reentry unit within BMV processes it. This team researches any documentation that is submitted by the customer or agent to ensure it is correct and that all missing documents have been received. Then the Reentry unit processes the paperwork received from customers and agents. In July, the Reentry unit received approximately 14,000 resubmitted transactions from customers and agents.

The Special Tags unit processes specialty work such as personalized plates, antique or classic registration, municipal vehicles, and other special-order plates. This unit also makes phone calls to customers. In July, they processed approximately 11,500 plate requests for these types of license plates.



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When a customer works with a third-party entity, by law the third-party entity has 20 days and an additional 10-day grace period to submit completed transactions to BMV (Vehicle Code Section 1103.1(d), (d.1)). Temporary license plates with the “Pink Slip” are valid for 90 days from the day of issuance, so it is possible a significant amount of time passes before the third-party agent is legally required to have the documents to the BMV for processing. Once these documents reach the BMV, BMV sorts the work and processes it in the order in which the work was received. The processing time described within the DEX unit earlier in my testimony applies to this work and this assumes the work includes all the required documents and can be completely processed. If, as noted above, work is returned for incomplete information, documents or fees, this can also add significantly to the timeline for processing.

HB 2638 includes language requiring the department to provide written notice to the customer in the event that work is returned due to an error, which PennDOT already does. When work is returned from BMV title and registration personnel, there is system-generated correspondence sent to the customer, which includes the paperwork originally submitted by the customer. The correspondence explains why the work is being returned. If, for example, it is for incorrect fees, it will have a detailed breakdown of what the fees are, the amount submitted, and the amount due. If it is for missing documents, it will inform the customer what they need to provide. If it is for a form being completed incorrectly or incompletely, the fields on the form will be highlighted or otherwise marked to indicate what needs to be updated or completed.

PennDOT is proud of our processing turnaround times and of the volume of work we complete, and we appreciate the partnerships we have with our third-party agents to get this work done. While the majority of our work is completed within these turnaround times, outliers can occur. For example, if PennDOT receives work from a dealer with an error, by law they have 30 days to return the corrected work to the department. Some transactions are complex, and errors can occur multiple times. When this happens, we work closely with all parties to get the work completed as expeditiously as possible, but delays can occur while we wait for correct paperwork or missing documentation to be submitted by a third-party entity or customer. We are concerned that HB 2638 does not account for these sorts of transactions. As stated in previous hearings, if there are individual cases for constituents having issues, we are available to look into the matter upon receiving the specific details of the case.

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak to you this morning. I would be happy to take any questions from the committee.