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Driver and Vehicle Services

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March 10, 2025

Jon Koznick, Chair

House Transportation Finance and Policy Committee

Dear Chair Koznick,

I am writing regarding HF1242 to note concerns with the bill. HF1242 allows public, private, and commercial CDL driving programs to schedule standing appointments with DVS. In the 2021 Driver Examination Report from the Office of the Legislative Auditor (OLA), it was noted that when DVS utilized standing appointments, it resulted in unequal treatment of driver education programs and individuals. The Department of Public Safety's Driver and Vehicle Services Division (DVS) does not support the use of standing appointments. As of last Thursday, there were over 100 commercial driver's license (CDL) appointments available throughout the state in the next 30 days.

DVS currently administers a limited third-party testing program for CDL. This bill would expand third-party CDL in Minnesota to allow approved third-party testing programs to test students of public, private, or commercial driving programs.

This expansion of third-party CDL testing will require additional resources within DVS to oversee and audit these programs. There are potential public safety concerns with elements of HF 1242. Without oversight and frequent audits, it can be difficult to ensure that third-party CDL testers are fully complying which then puts other drivers on the road at risk. In addition, the current language of the bill does not provide DVS the authority to terminate CDL programs if violations or concerns are found. This authority is a critical component to ensuring public safety as well as ensuring compliance with federal requirements.

HF1242 also requires DVS to create and administer a new commercial driver training assistance program. DVS does not currently administer grants or reimbursements and has no staffing or expertise in this area. Based on the current language of the assistance program, it is unclear as to whether it is a reimbursement, a loan, or a grant, and there is no mechanism for DVS to recover the money if the person fails to complete the program and refuses to repay the funds. We welcome a conversation about the best location for this type of program within state government.

DVS shares this committee's commitment to serving Minnesotans in the best way possible. But the changes proposed in this bill are likely to have unintended consequences. We look forward to continuing to discuss the language to address these concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Pong Xiong', written in a cursive style.

Pong Xiong
Director, DPS Driver and Vehicle Services Division

cc: Representative Jim Joy, HF1242 Chief Author