

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA THE
DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES AGENCY PEFORMANCE
OVERSIGHT HEARING ON FISCAL YEARS 2020 – 2021**



Testimony of
Gabriel Robinson, Director
Department of Motor Vehicles

Before the
Committee on Transportation and the Environment
Mary Cheh, Chairperson

Tuesday, February 9, 2021
12:00 a.m. – Virtual Meeting Platform – Room A

Good morning, Chairperson Cheh, Committee members, councilmembers, and staff of the Committee. I am Gabriel Robinson, Director of the District of Columbia Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). I am pleased to testify before you today.

Prior to sharing the major FY20 and year-to-date FY21 DMV accomplishments, I would like to thank our customers, Chairperson Cheh, this Committee, and the rest of the Council for your support, on behalf of Mayor Muriel Bowser. The feedback you provide to this agency is valued and critically important in guiding our decision-making process for service improvements. I would also like to extend a special thank you to all my colleagues at DMV for their dedication and hard work. During the past 11 months, they have continued to serve our residents throughout the public health emergency, while demonstrating incredible resilience as they cope with new challenges within the workplace as well as at home.

During FY20, DMV provided service to over 581,000 licensed drivers/identification card holders and over 301,000 registered vehicle owners at four service centers. Additionally, we provided adjudication services, including conducting over 320,000 in-person, mail, and virtual hearings, and DMV collected ticket payments for more than 2.2 million tickets issued. We also conducted over 135,000 annual vehicle inspections. DMV interacts with District residents and non-residents, with an average of 3,000 daily customer contacts—more than almost any other District government agency.

With the Mayor's announcement of the public health emergency on March 11, 2020, DMV transitioned to a modified operational status. Additionally, the Mayor's emergency Order

extended the expiration date for all DMV documents with an expiration date beginning on March 1, 2020 until 45 days after the health emergency concludes.

Under Phase Two reopening, DMV began operations on an “appointment only” basis at all Service Centers, Adjudication Services, and the Brentwood Road Test/CDL Office. At the same time, the Inspection Station opened on a first-come, first-serve basis and our self-service (OBD) vehicle emissions inspection kiosk opened 24/7. DMV currently remains in this operational status.

Moving to an “appointment only” operational model during Phase One and Phase Two reopening allowed DMV to efficiently serve those residents who required in-person services, while maintaining a safe environment for our customers and our employees. DMV also took additional precautions to limit the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) at all locations where our employees interact in-person with the public, including requiring all customers to wear a face covering prior to entering any of our locations, only permitting customers obtaining service to enter our facilities (with limited exceptions for customers who require additional assistance), and ensuring customers and employees at all DMV locations maintain social distancing of six feet or more. Additionally, DMV implemented an enhanced cleaning and sanitation program during Phase One and Phase Two with multiple daily cleanings of commonly used areas and items, specifically at our service centers where in-person volume is the highest.

DMV also took additional steps in September to serve more customers safely during the health emergency by releasing additional appointment slots through our online appointment scheduler.

Hundreds of new appointment slots are now released most Tuesday's at 3 p.m. As a result, we have also been able to increase in-person appointment capacity by offering overtime to DMV employees and extending our appointment hours to 8 p.m. on select Wednesdays. In September, DMV also added our second in-person Test Proctoring Center where new drivers can schedule an appointment to take their knowledge test. In November 2020, DMV also added a new "Senior Citizen 65+" category to our online appointment scheduler, where appointments have been reserved for the District's senior population. The improvements to our processes during the health emergency have extended to our Inspection Station and Brentwood Road Test/CDL Office where we have streamlined the operational flow for vehicle inspections and road test examinations. Finally, in August 2020, our Adjudication Services team launched a virtual hearing pilot for minor moving violations to address social distancing challenges. The pilot addresses this challenge by allowing all participants, including hearing examiners, police officers, and drivers wishing to contest their citations, to appear at a hearing remotely.

To further simplify services for our customers, DMV has worked aggressively to expand online and virtual options. Earlier this month, DMV made several transactions available online at dmv.dc.gov. Customers now can title and register a vehicle for the first time via a hybrid online and mail transaction. Additionally, residents can now convert a provisional license online to a full REAL ID driver license with conditions. Residents can also now add the Motorcycle "M" Endorsement to their license via an easy online transaction. DMV is also negotiating legal terms with a third-party provider to implement a virtual knowledge testing process, allowing residents to complete the test from the comfort of their own home.

At this time, I would like to share a few statistics with the Committee to further highlight how DMV has been supporting the needs of our residents since Mayor Bowser announced the public health emergency on March 11, 2020. Since the beginning of the health emergency through January 31, 2021, DMV has made more than 120,000 in-person appointment slots available to the public. Additionally, between March 11 and January 31, 2021, DMV mailed product to 127,162 individuals generated from online transactions. Our Adjudication Services team has also been busy, completing 217,846 online hearings, 36,522 mail-in hearings, and 957 virtual hearings during the same time period. Finally, since our OBD Vehicle Emissions Inspection Kiosk reopened on June 23, 2020, 103,462 vehicle inspections have been completed at the Inspection Station and residents have completed 4,627 vehicle inspections using the OBD Kiosk through January 31, 2021.

DMV remains fully functional, and we continue to serve the public as demonstrated by the large volume of work the agency has produced since the beginning of the public health emergency. In response to residents seeking appointments, DMV will continue to identify opportunities to make more online transactions available, and also increase the availability of in-person transactions, when it is safe to do so. We remain committed to serving the public in a manner that keeps everyone safe, including our customers and our employees. I personally want to thank the public for their patience and understanding over the past 11 months. I also thank Team DMV for their extraordinary commitment to keeping the District and our residents safe and moving throughout the current public health emergency.

DMV has also continued to reimagine the way we conduct our business by leveraging technology to help our customers complete various transactions without having to visit a DMV facility. In September 2020, the agency announced the launch of our newly enhanced mobile app, and we promoted the technology to the public through a branding campaign called “DMV at Your Fingertips.” The upgrades to DMV’s mobile app allowed customers to complete several new transactions from their smartphone devices including: Driver License and ID Card Renewal, Registration Renewal, Driver License and ID Card Replacement, Registration Replacement, Tag Cancellation, and Organ Donor Status Update. Additionally, on February 1, 2021, DMV introduced several additional transactions to our mobile app including: Purchasing a Digital Certified Driver Record, Insurance Lapse Payment, Personalized Tag Request, and Ticket Payment. DMV’s mobile app usage has increased from approximately 5,000 users in September 2020 to more than 15,000 users currently. We encourage the public to use DMV’s mobile app. It’s free and can be downloaded in Apple’s App Store and the Google Play Store. Search DMV and download the app today.

In support of our local veterans, and to coincide with Veterans Day, DMV introduced a new specialty license plate on November 10, 2020. The specialty tags include separate designs and emblems for each branch of the U.S. Armed Forces: Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, and Coast Guard. The \$52 application fee and \$26 yearly display fee for the specialty tags benefits the Office of Veterans Affairs Fund. DMV has strategically promoted the veteran specialty tags through our website and social media channels.

DMV recently finalized revisions to the Vehicle Excise Tax as required by the Clean Energy Omnibus Amendment Act of 2018. DMV has revised the vehicle excise tax formula to incentivize electric and fuel-efficient vehicles over less efficient vehicles, with certain provisions to protect low and middle-income residents. Additionally, DMV employees have been trained on the revised motor vehicle excise tax, so they have the ability to title a vehicle adhering to the revised excise tax law.

On January 26, 2021, DMV opened our new Deanwood Road Test/CDL Center located in Ward 7 at 1421 Kenilworth Avenue, NE. The new Deanwood Center replaced the agency's Brentwood Road Test/CDL Services Office, which closed on January 23, 2021.

DMV also recently implemented the D.C. Insurance Verification System (DCIVS) to verify automobile insurance for vehicles registered in the District. All vehicle insurance companies that do business in the District are required to report to DMV, within 30 calendar days, all instances of terminated, cancelled, or expired insurance for vehicles registered in the District. Vehicle insurance companies and agents can now use DCIVS when inquiring and responding to vehicle insurance related issues.

Educating residents about the importance of obtaining a REAL ID credential has also remained a key initiative of DMV throughout FY20 and into FY21. Currently, 92% of D.C. residents are REAL ID compliant. Starting in FY20, to assist with the compliance process, DMV began offering District residents whose non-REAL ID credential expires on or after October 1, 2020 the opportunity to renew their credential early. DMV completed 6,092 REAL ID early renewal

appointments prior to the public health emergency. Due to circumstances resulting from the public health emergency, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security announced an extension of the REAL ID enforcement deadline by a year. The new deadline for REAL ID enforcement is October 1, 2021. DMV estimates there are 3,500 residents who have a non-REAL ID compliant credential that expires after October 1, 2021, and we will continue to do targeted outreach to these individuals throughout FY21 to facilitate early renewal.

In support of the Mayor’s initiative to increase job opportunities for District residents living East of the Anacostia River, DMV engaged in a partnership with the U.S. Census Bureau to host recruitment workshops in February and March of 2020 for residents living in Wards 7 and 8. DMV’s Human Resources team and U.S. Census Bureau staff were on-site at each job fair educating residents about the importance of being counted and participating in the 2020 Census as well as offering attendees helpful information related to job interviews and the application process for U.S. Census Bureau jobs. Event attendees had the opportunity to apply for full and part-time positions with the Washington D.C. Area Census Office. Available positions offered hourly rates ranging between \$22.50 and \$27.50. In addition to supporting the District’s goal of ensuring its residents were counted in the U.S. Census, along with the hiring needs of the U.S. Census Bureau, the recruitment workshops offered DMV the opportunity to build relationships with Ward 7 and Ward 8 residents.

On November 15, 2019, DMV opened the District’s first OBD emissions kiosk at the Takoma Recreation Center in Ward 4. The OBD kiosk is an ATM-style machine that provides 24-hour access, 7 days a week for District residents to perform their own emissions test. The kiosk is

available for vehicle model years 2005 and newer requiring a re-inspection. Since the kiosk opened, more than 5,800 emission tests have been completed using the new technology.

While DMV has made significant changes to our operations over the past year, dictated by the ongoing health emergency, we have continued to make improvements in the ways we serve our customers and we look forward to continuing that momentum and doing more in FY21. Public safety and customer service will continue to be a priority, and I look forward to working with my team to identify new opportunities to improve operational processes and make it easier for our customers to complete their transactions with DMV. Again, we appreciate the support we have received from the Council and look forward to continuing our efforts to improve the quality of service to the residents of the District of Columbia. In closing, we would like to thank Mayor Bowser for her continued leadership, particularly throughout the past 11 months, and commitment to good government and accountability. I will now address any questions you may have.