

# California Legislature

July 2, 2018

The Honorable Al Muratsuchi  
Chair, Joint Legislative Audit Committee  
1020 N Street, Room 107  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Chairman Muratsuchi:

We are writing to request an audit to address the recent increase in wait times at the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). Our offices have experienced a surge in constituent complaints, and reports from across the state show that customers are routinely experiencing more than five hour delays at DMV to process routine transactions (see attached). Appointments are booked more than a month in advance, and even customers with appointments are facing hours-long waits. According to DMV, these delays are primarily due to REAL ID implementation. The challenges associated with this process are considerable, and the spike in DMV visits is projected to continue through at least 2020. Therefore, it is imperative that the Legislature evaluate DMV's plans to handle the workload and reduce wait times.

The federal REAL ID Act of 2005 establishes new requirements for state-issued driver's license/identification (DL/ID) cards that must be met for purposes of boarding aircraft or entering a federal building. Nearly 30 million Californians currently hold DL/ID cards, and all of these cards will become ineligible for air travel on October 1, 2020. Because new cards may only be obtained in person, all Californians who wish to fly with a state DL/ID card will need to appear at a DMV branch office and apply for a replacement over the next two years.

The state began issuing compliant cards on January 22, and DMV expects that more than 23 million REAL ID applicants will visit DMV branch offices over the next five years. This is a monumental undertaking that will place considerable strain on DMV resources, and create substantial inconvenience for millions of Californians. DMV estimates it will need to spend nearly a quarter of a billion dollars (\$220.6 million) and "conduct a mass hiring of employees" over six years to meet this challenge. DMV recently hired 330 new employees, and plans to soon hire an additional 166 workers to help process REAL ID applications.

Wait times have dramatically increased during the first six months of REAL ID implementation. We are deeply concerned that if DMV's plans and strategies are inadequate, constituents will continue to face unacceptably long wait times, inaccurate information, and disorganization at branch offices. The inconvenience could be compounded if applicants are turned away for lacking correct documents, face delays in obtaining a physical card, or receive a card that is ultimately deemed noncompliant by the federal government. For these reasons, I request that the State Auditor review DMV's implementation plan, and address the following questions:

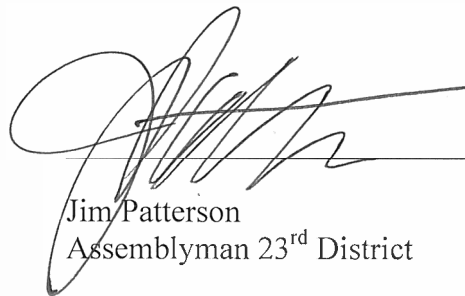
1. How much have wait times increased, and appointment availability decreased, since DMV began offering REAL ID DL/ID cards? Do these wait times vary significantly based on location?
2. How accurate and reliable are the wait times that are posted on the DMV's website? What are the average wait times for individuals with and without appointments?
3. What initial steps has DMV taken to reduce wait times and increase appointment availability? Have these efforts improved service for DMV customers?
4. Does DMV have adequate long-term plans to address the REAL ID workload increase and reduce wait times?
5. How much have other factors contributed to the recent spike in wait times (e.g. new queuing system, conversion to electronic DL/ID applications, IT system failures)? Does DMV have adequate long-term plans to address each of these issues and reduce wait times?
6. For the \$70 million already provided by the Legislature for REAL ID compliance, is DMV on track to meet its hiring projections? Is DMV meeting its goals to ensure these employees are adequately trained?
7. Have the addition of Saturday service and extended weekday hours reduced overall wait times? How does DMV determine which offices will provide these offerings?
8. What is the status of DMV's certification of REAL ID compliance by the Department of Homeland Security? Is DMV on track to receive certification by October 10, 2018, and avoid the invalidation of all REAL ID DL/ID cards issued to date?
9. Is DMV meeting its goals for media outreach and public education? How does DMV evaluate the success of these efforts?
10. Are forms and instructions at branch offices clear and accurate to minimize transaction times?
11. In the initial months of implementation, what is the proportion of REAL ID applicants turned away at branch offices due to incorrect documents? Does DMV have a process to fast-track these applicants for a future appointment?
12. Has the DMV diverted resources from other services, for example Commercial Drivers Licenses? Have wait times for these services increased? If so, what are they doing to address these wait times?

Thank you for your consideration of this request. Should you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact Daniel Ballon in the Assembly Republican Caucus Office of Policy and Budget at (916) 319-3900.

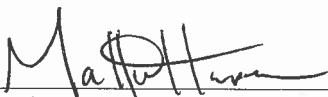
Sincerely,



Phillip Chen  
Assemblyman 55<sup>th</sup> District



Jim Patterson  
Assemblyman 23<sup>rd</sup> District



Matthew Harper  
Assemblyman 74<sup>th</sup> District