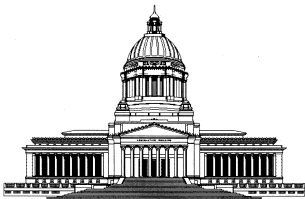


**FOLLOW-UP: 1999  
DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING  
PERFORMANCE AUDIT**  
Full Report 01-8, click here  
**BRIEFING REPORT 01-8**

DIGEST

JUNE 27, 2001



STATE OF WASHINGTON

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## FOLLOW-UP: 1999 MOTOR VEHICLE AND DRIVER LICENSING FUNCTIONS

### Summary

The 1999 Performance Audit of the Motor Vehicle and Driver Licensing Functions of the Department of Licensing was conducted by the firm of PriceWaterhouseCoopers, under contract to the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC). This follow-up report focuses on selected issues deemed to be of greatest interest to JLARC members; including, 1) issues pertaining to customer service, 2) what was referred to in the audit as “potential use tax abuses,” and 3) performance measures (relating to DOL’s Vehicle Services Division). Summary findings include:

- In the area of customer service, there have been mixed results. Overall performance, as measured by average customer wait times statewide, is relatively unchanged. The Department reports, however, that it has been successful in reducing wait times at selected offices that had particularly high average wait times; in some cases by significant amounts.

The Department has implemented some recommendations from the audit, such as: equipping more offices with information desks; developing a workload and performance assessment tool; and providing for the use of credit cards for some transactions. It has not fully implemented others, including providing for increased hours at its licensing offices, and improved training for newly hired staff.

- The Department has responded positively to the use tax issue. This is the tax due when someone purchases a used vehicle from a private party. The concern was that the state may not have been collecting the full amount of use tax it was due, because licensing clerks were not routinely checking a vehicle’s reported purchase price against industry standards of fair market value. The Department has complied with the audit’s recommendation to automate this process, and reports that collections have increased over \$4 million as a result.
- Finally, although the Vehicle Services Division has revised its performance measures, it still needs to develop customer satisfaction type measures that can be used to assess overall program effectiveness.