

*Joint Transportation Committee Study*

# VEHICLE TITLING AND REGISTRATION PROCESSES

FINDINGS AND POTENTIAL  
RECOMMENDATIONS

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*September 18, 2014  
Yakima City Hall*

# Vehicle Licensing in Washington

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Approximately 8.4 million annual motor vehicle title and license transactions

County Auditors under contract with DOL to perform vehicle titling and licensing transactions

In 31 counties, County Auditors contract with 141 Subagents to conduct vehicle transactions

DOL supports County Auditors and Subagents in providing licensing services

- Vehicle Field System in licensing offices--645 terminals
- \$7 million per biennium in supplies including hardware, paper, and postage costs

# Study Proviso in Transportation Budget

(ESSB 6001, Sec (204)(7))

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Review existing vehicle titling and registration processes and policies for County Auditors, Agents and Subagents

Make recommendations to streamline processes, modernize policies, and identify potential information technology opportunities

Involve a Work Group of County Auditors, Subagents, and DOL representatives

# Study Activities

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Staff meetings with DOL to understand current processes, Technology Modernization Project, and to gather background data

Site visits to County Auditor licensing offices and interviews with County Auditors and staff

Discussions with DOL, Auditor and Subagent members of Work Group, and others

Work Group meeting on August 18, 2014, to discuss observations and potential recommendations

# Observations

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Widespread frustration with DOL's Vehicle Field System (Auditors, Subagents and DOL share this frustration)

- Antiquated technology
- System inflexibility
- Requires too much dedicated office space

Issues with requirements concerning paper processing, records retention, daily mail volumes, and other system requirements that appear to cost too much money and time

# Observations (cont'd)

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Many of these issues may be addressed with DOL's Technology Modernization Project, currently being developed by DOL.

Additional training for all licensing personnel is needed.

Issues of concern vary among counties, as do potential solutions.

- *"One size fits all"* doesn't always work

# Other Observations

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DOL Director's focus on process improvements has produced good results

DOL depends on licensing agents to properly implement licensing laws and policies, such as license fraud prevention

Other states have alternative models for administering licensing functions

Need capacity and flexibility in technology to address future transportation issues

# Potential Recommendations: Streamlining Processes

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1. Some but not all Auditors have implemented paper reduction policies between Subagents and Auditors, and Auditors and DOL. DOL should:
  - Convene a Lean event for paperwork reduction
  - Increase opportunities to scan, electronically transmit documents
2. Reduce USPS mailing costs, and explore alternative means to transmit documents, such as UPS or electronically
3. Explore more efficient inventory delivery from DOL to Auditors and Subagents



# Potential Recommendations:

## Improved Training and Communication

1. Improve DOL staff training to ensure consistent and timely answers are provided at the vehicle support center, and consistent training is provided to Auditors and Subagents
2. Smaller counties would benefit from more frequent DOL training opportunities.
3. Auditors should periodically visit and observe their Subagents, and DOL should periodically visit Auditors and Subagents
4. DOL should increase face-to-face interactions with Auditors and Subagents
5. DOL should provide consistent fraud detection training for licensing agents and utilize agents to help identify fraud issues

# Potential Recommendations:

## Process Improvements

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1. Auditors should work with Subagents and DOL to develop guidelines for Auditor supervision of Subagents
2. Auditors, Subagents, and DOL should meet at least annually for training, and discussions about process improvements and training needs
3. DOL should convene a Lean event or other process improvement to identify efficiency opportunities associated with elimination of periodic plate replacement
4. DOL should improve response times for licensing agent calls to DOL vehicle support center, e.g. explore Live Chat or Instant Messaging
5. DOL will research issues regarding signature requirements for title work.

# Potential Recommendations:

## Technology Modernization

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1. DOL should consider a TechMod\* newsletter to Auditors and Subagents to better inform them of design, implementation and training
2. TechMod may address the current need for a dedicated terminal data line for titling and registration work; and provide opportunity for significant reductions in paper transactions

*\*TechMod is a multi-year DOL effort to modernize its business and technology systems, including vehicle and driver licensing systems. DOL anticipates the new systems to be in place in Auditor and Subagent offices by July 1, 2017.*

# Potential Recommendations: For Future Consideration

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1. DOL should convene a Lean or other process to evaluate opportunities for efficiencies associated with the shift to more online transactions and self-service business approaches

# Other Suggestions Considered

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1. DOL should consider future alternative vehicle licensing regimes, including bar codes or other registration indicators, that could address future transportation requirements including VMT measurement, toll collection, and other tasks
2. Title work should be done either by public agencies (Auditors) or private parties (Subagents and/or car dealers or others), but not both
3. DOL should directly supervise Subagents, and take Auditors out of the Subagent supervision
4. Eliminate auditing of Subagents by both DOL and County Auditors

## Other Suggestions Considered, cont'd

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5. Allow auto dealers to do their own vehicle title work and issue license plates
6. Make all vehicle titles “quick titles”, and reduce the \$50 quick title fee

# Next Steps

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Staff to complete draft report, and distribute to Work Group members for comment in October

Draft final report is due to the Transportation Committees by December 1, 2014.

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# Questions?