

Comment Letter on House Bill 166 to House Transportation Committee

April 16, 2021

Representative Hopkins, Chair
House Transportation Committee
Alaska State Capital

Dear Chair Hopkins, and members of the House Transportation Committee:

We urge you to oppose HB 166, An Act relating to the issuance of vehicle registration plates.

Motor vehicles are used in 70 percent of all serious crimes. Front and rear fully reflective license plates are essential in the quick and accurate identification of motor vehicles, even at highway speeds. In order to enforce and properly identify criminals, law enforcement uses automated license plate readers to apprehend individuals involved in crimes. Many of these crimes include stolen vehicles, outstanding warrants, and amber alerts. Anchorage is in the Top 5 of cities with the highest vehicle theft per capita, the front plate is critical to finding stolen vehicles.

The front license plate enhances visibility during the night. Seeing a vehicle more quickly allows drivers to better react in the case of stalled or crashed vehicles, helping to decrease the chance for an accident. The front plate also helps to solve crimes when a camera records video that includes a front plate. The chances of an eyewitness seeing a license plate number in a hit and run are improved greatly.

The American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators (AAMVA), the National Sheriffs' Association (NSA), the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) as with virtually all other highway safety and law enforcement organizations have long supported front and rear license plates for vehicle registration compliance, officer safety and traffic enforcement purposes.

Many after-market, no-drill front-plate brackets are readily available online and at retailers.

3M urges members of this committee to swiftly oppose passage of HB 166. We kindly request that this message be entered into the record. Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,

Carlos Ibarra

3M Science.
Applied to Life.™

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April 26, 2021

TO: House Transportation Committee Members
FR: Sergeant Jeremy Conkling, APDEA President
RE: HB 166

Representative Stutes, Representative Wool, and Committee Members,

My name is Sergeant Jeremy Conkling, and I am the President of the Anchorage Police Department Employees Association (APDEA). I represent over 570 members of the Anchorage Police Department and I write to you to communicate our opposition to HB 166.

The removal of front license plates would create significant officer safety and investigatory issues for police officers. I've listed the most problematic ones below:

- Traffic Officers routinely use the front license plate to identify a vehicle which they must turn around to stop. For example, a speeding vehicle passes by and you can get at least part of the plate, then use that information to make sure you have the correct vehicle when you catch back up.
- Traffic officers looking for REDDI (Report Every Dangerous Driver Immediately) vehicles can usually read the front plate of an approaching vehicle but cannot not turn to see the rear plate after a vehicle passes.
- Officers have received notifications from APSIN on a stolen vehicle by running the front plate through the APSIN database, then learn that the rear plate had been swapped out with a plate not yet reported as stolen. This means that if they had run only the rear plate, they would never have known the vehicle was stolen.
- It is common for people to steal plates from similar vehicles and use them for nefarious purposes. A vehicle having one plate becomes suspicious to officers, leading to further investigation. This commonly results in identification of a crime directly or a notification to citizens that they are missing a plate, causing them to then report the plate as missing or stolen.
- In the last 24 months the Fatality Investigators have had 4 cases in which a front plate has provided crucial information which is directly credited with solving cases. (APD Cases 19-29176, 20-5511, 20-29995, 21-148)

- Traffic cameras at intersections emphasize vehicles on approach, meaning a front plate is more likely to be recognized whereas a rear plate is not.
- Having identifying information on the front and back doubles our chances of properly identifying a suspect vehicle. I worry about the additional hinderance potentially leading to missed identifications or misidentifications.
- The increased proliferation of video in public and private places amplifies the possibility of identifying suspect vehicles. Removing a plate decreases the potential identification success rate by 50%.

I strongly feel the potential cost saving is far outweighed by the decrease in efficiency and effectiveness of public safety, and the increased danger to our police officers.

Respectfully submitted,



Sergeant Jeremy Conkling
APDEA President
