

JAY INSLEE
Governor



JOHN R. BATISTE
Chief

STATE OF WASHINGTON
WASHINGTON STATE PATROL

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November 19, 2024

Mr. Pat Sullivan
Office of Financial Management
PO Box 43113
Olympia WA 98504-3113

Dear Mr. Sullivan:

In accordance with the November 8, 2024, memo to agency directors to “identify savings options for both the 2025 Supplemental budgets and 2025-27 budgets,” the Washington State Patrol (WSP) has identified the following potential savings.

The WSP has already taken significant budget reductions in the current 2023-25 biennium (in excess of \$60 million from our State Patrol Highway Account funding). These reductions combined with long procurement timelines beyond our control mean that most if not all of our current allocations are already dedicated to purchases or projects and changes could cause extra charges for contract cancellations and/or restocking fees.

Likewise, our current General Fund – State funding is primarily focused on mission critical activities, such as criminal investigations, narcotics, missing or endangered children, crime and toxicology laboratory, and executive protection functions and has little anticipated variance at the end of the current biennium.

For the 2025-27 biennial budget, the WSP could return \$4.5 million in 081-State Patrol Highway Account-State funding by eliminating the 25-employee Vehicle Inspection Number program (VIN).

The WSP performs physical inspections on vehicles that have been rebuilt after being destroyed or declared a total loss by an insurance company. They also will perform physical inspections as required on vehicles reported stolen, homemade vehicles, or other

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vehicles without a proper VIN, when there is a VIN discrepancy, when there is a record dispute, when ownership is in doubt, or when other special cases exist. VIN was originally placed with the WSP to detect large-scale criminal activity; however, this activity has never materialized. Now the WSP operates VIN for the benefit of the Department of Licensing, and it has little or no tie to our mission-critical goals or objectives.

Regarding the VIN program, RCW 46.12.560 states, “Before accepting an application for a certificate of title, the department, county auditor or other agent, or subagent appointed by the director shall require an applicant to provide a certificate of vehicle inspection completed by the Washington state patrol **or** other authorized inspector if the vehicle:...”. Currently there are no other “authorized inspector[s]” in Washington state aside from our VIN team. However, this does not prohibit VIN inspectors from falling under a different organizational umbrella and continuing to be an “authorized inspector.” WAC 308-56A-150, certificate of vehicle inspection, use the same language as the RCW, stating the WSP **or** “**other authorized inspector.**”

We have been unable to find any RCW, WAC, or legal guidance that states that the WSP “shall” be the sole agency responsible for VIN inspections, only that we do conduct VIN inspections, presumably because the VIN program is assigned to us. In addition, we cannot find anything in law prohibiting the VIN program from being moved to another state agency nor that it shall be overseen by the WSP.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Mr. Walter R. Hamilton
Budget and Fiscal Services

cc: Mr. Erik Hansen, Office of Financial Management
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