

CERTIFICATION OF ENROLLMENT

**HOUSE BILL 2065**

58th Legislature  
2003 Regular Session

Passed by the House April 27, 2003  
Yeas 58 Nays 40

---

**Speaker of the House of Representatives**

Passed by the Senate April 17, 2003  
Yeas 41 Nays 7

---

**President of the Senate**

Approved

---

**Governor of the State of Washington**

CERTIFICATE

I, Cynthia Zehnder, Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives of the State of Washington, do hereby certify that the attached is **HOUSE BILL 2065** as passed by the House of Representatives and the Senate on the dates hereon set forth.

---

**Chief Clerk**

FILED

**Secretary of State  
State of Washington**

---

HOUSE BILL 2065

---

AS AMENDED BY THE SENATE

Passed Legislature - 2003 Regular Session

State of Washington                      58th Legislature                      2003 Regular Session

By Representatives Simpson and Edwards

Read first time 02/21/2003. Referred to Committee on Transportation.

1            AN ACT Relating to license plate technology; amending RCW  
2 46.16.230, 46.16.233, and 46.01.140; adding new sections to chapter  
3 46.16 RCW; and creating new sections.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5            **Sec. 1.** RCW 46.16.230 and 1992 c 7 s 41 are each amended to read  
6 as follows:

7            (1) The director shall furnish to all persons making satisfactory  
8 application for vehicle license as provided by law, two identical  
9 vehicle license number plates each containing the vehicle license  
10 number to be displayed on such vehicle as by law required: PROVIDED,  
11 That if the vehicle to be licensed is a trailer, semitrailer or  
12 motorcycle only one vehicle license number plate shall be issued for  
13 each thereof. The number and plate shall be of such size and color and  
14 shall contain such symbols indicative of the registration period for  
15 which the same is issued and of the state of Washington, as shall be  
16 determined and prescribed by the director. Any vehicle license number  
17 plate or plates issued to a dealer shall contain thereon a sufficient  
18 and satisfactory indication that such plates have been issued to a  
19 dealer in vehicles. All vehicle license number plates (~~may~~) shall be

1 obtained by the director from the metal working plant of a state  
2 correctional facility (~~or from any source in accordance with existing~~  
3 ~~state of Washington purchasing procedures~~)).

4 (2) Notwithstanding the foregoing provisions of this section, the  
5 director may, in his discretion and under such rules and regulations as  
6 he may prescribe, adopt a type of vehicle license number plates whereby  
7 the same shall be used as long as legible on the vehicle for which  
8 issued, with provision for tabs or emblems to be attached thereto or  
9 elsewhere on the vehicle to signify renewals, in which event the term  
10 "vehicle license number plate" as used in any enactment shall be deemed  
11 to include in addition to such plate the tab or emblem signifying  
12 renewal except when such plate contains the designation of the current  
13 year without reference to any tab or emblem. Renewals shall be  
14 effected by the issuance and display of such tab or emblem.

15 (3) The department shall implement a flat, digitally printed  
16 license plate system. This system must be in place and operational by  
17 July 1, 2004, and must be used to produce all license plates issued by  
18 the department by no later than January 1, 2007. The department must  
19 phase in the production of flat, digitally printed license plates by  
20 first issuing special and personalized plates using this system.  
21 Before January 1, 2007, the department may issue all license plates as  
22 flat, digitally printed license plates, if the department determines  
23 that production of all license plates by the digital printing system is  
24 economically viable.

25 **Sec. 2.** RCW 46.16.233 and 2000 c 37 s 1 are each amended to read  
26 as follows:

27 (1) Except for those license plates issued under RCW 46.16.305(1)  
28 before January 1, 1987, under RCW 46.16.305(3), and to commercial  
29 vehicles with a gross weight in excess of twenty-six thousand pounds,  
30 effective with vehicle registrations due or to become due on January 1,  
31 2001, the appearance of all vehicle license plates must be (~~issued on~~  
32 ~~a standard background~~) legible and clearly identifiable as a  
33 Washington state license plate, as designated by the department.

34 (2) Additionally, to ensure maximum legibility and reflectivity,  
35 the department shall periodically provide for the replacement of  
36 license plates, except for commercial vehicles with a gross weight in

1 excess of twenty-six thousand pounds. Frequency of replacement shall  
2 be established in accordance with empirical studies documenting the  
3 longevity of the reflective materials used to make license plates.

4 (3) In providing for the periodic replacement of license plates,  
5 the department shall offer to vehicle owners the option of retaining  
6 their current license plate numbers. The department shall charge a  
7 retention fee of twenty dollars if this option is exercised. Revenue  
8 generated from the retention fee must be deposited into the license  
9 plate technology account created under section 4 of this act until such  
10 time as the financing necessary to implement a digital license plate  
11 system has been paid in full. After the financing has been paid in  
12 full, the revenue collected under this section shall be deposited into  
13 the multimodal transportation account.

14 **Sec. 3.** RCW 46.01.140 and 2001 c 331 s 1 are each amended to read  
15 as follows:

16 (1) The county auditor, if appointed by the director of licensing  
17 shall carry out the provisions of this title relating to the licensing  
18 of vehicles and the issuance of vehicle license number plates under the  
19 direction and supervision of the director and may with the approval of  
20 the director appoint assistants as special deputies and recommend  
21 subagents to accept applications and collect fees for vehicle licenses  
22 and transfers and to deliver vehicle license number plates.

23 (2) A county auditor appointed by the director may request that the  
24 director appoint subagencies within the county.

25 (a) Upon authorization of the director, the auditor shall use an  
26 open competitive process including, but not limited to, a written  
27 business proposal and oral interview to determine the qualifications of  
28 all interested applicants.

29 (b) A subagent may recommend a successor who is either the  
30 subagent's sibling, spouse, or child, or a subagency employee, as long  
31 as the recommended successor participates in the open, competitive  
32 process used to select an applicant. In making successor  
33 recommendation and appointment determinations, the following provisions  
34 apply:

35 (i) If a subagency is held by a partnership or corporate entity,  
36 the nomination must be submitted on behalf of, and agreed to by, all  
37 partners or corporate officers.

1 (ii) No subagent may receive any direct or indirect compensation or  
2 remuneration from any party or entity in recognition of a successor  
3 nomination. A subagent may not receive any financial benefit from the  
4 transfer or termination of an appointment.

5 (iii) (a) and (b) of this subsection are intended to assist in the  
6 efficient transfer of appointments in order to minimize public  
7 inconvenience. They do not create a proprietary or property interest  
8 in the appointment.

9 (c) The auditor shall submit all proposals to the director, and  
10 shall recommend the appointment of one or more subagents who have  
11 applied through the open competitive process. The auditor shall  
12 include in his or her recommendation to the director, not only the name  
13 of the successor who is a relative or employee, if applicable and if  
14 otherwise qualified, but also the name of one other applicant who is  
15 qualified and was chosen through the open competitive process. The  
16 director has final appointment authority.

17 (3)(a) A county auditor who is appointed as an agent by the  
18 department shall enter into a standard contract provided by the  
19 director, developed with the advice of the title and registration  
20 advisory committee.

21 (b) A subagent appointed under subsection (2) of this section shall  
22 enter into a standard contract with the county auditor, developed with  
23 the advice of the title and registration advisory committee. The  
24 director shall provide the standard contract to county auditors.

25 (c) The contracts provided for in (a) and (b) of this subsection  
26 must contain at a minimum provisions that:

27 (i) Describe the responsibilities, and where applicable, the  
28 liability, of each party relating to the service expectations and  
29 levels, equipment to be supplied by the department, and equipment  
30 maintenance;

31 (ii) Require the specific type of insurance or bonds so that the  
32 state is protected against any loss of collected motor vehicle tax  
33 revenues or loss of equipment;

34 (iii) Specify the amount of training that will be provided by the  
35 state, the county auditor, or subagents;

36 (iv) Describe allowable costs that may be charged to vehicle  
37 licensing activities as provided for in (d) of this subsection;

1 (v) Describe the causes and procedures for termination of the  
2 contract, which may include mediation and binding arbitration.

3 (d) The department shall develop procedures that will standardize  
4 and prescribe allowable costs that may be assigned to vehicle licensing  
5 and vessel registration and title activities performed by county  
6 auditors.

7 (e) The contracts may include any provision that the director deems  
8 necessary to ensure acceptable service and the full collection of  
9 vehicle and vessel tax revenues.

10 (f) The director may waive any provisions of the contract deemed  
11 necessary in order to ensure that readily accessible service is  
12 provided to the citizens of the state.

13 (4)(a) At any time any application is made to the director, the  
14 county auditor, or other agent pursuant to any law dealing with  
15 licenses, registration, or the right to operate any vehicle or vessel  
16 upon the public highways or waters of this state, excluding applicants  
17 already paying such fee under RCW 46.16.070 or 46.16.085, the applicant  
18 shall pay to the director, county auditor, or other agent a fee of  
19 three dollars for each application in addition to any other fees  
20 required by law.

21 (b) Counties that do not cover the expenses of vehicle licensing  
22 and vessel registration and title activities may submit to the  
23 department a request for cost-coverage moneys. The request must be  
24 submitted on a form developed by the department. The department shall  
25 develop procedures to verify whether a request is reasonable. Payment  
26 shall be made on requests found to be allowable from the licensing  
27 services account.

28 (c) Applicants for certificates of ownership, including applicants  
29 paying fees under RCW 46.16.070 or 46.16.085, shall pay to the  
30 director, county auditor, or other agent a fee of four dollars in  
31 addition to any other fees required by law.

32 (d) The fees under (a) and (c) of this subsection, if paid to the  
33 county auditor as agent of the director, or if paid to a subagent of  
34 the county auditor, shall be paid to the county treasurer in the same  
35 manner as other fees collected by the county auditor and credited to  
36 the county current expense fund. If the fee is paid to another agent  
37 of the director, the fee shall be used by the agent to defray his or  
38 her expenses in handling the application.

1 (e) Applicants required to pay the three-dollar fee established  
2 under (a) of this subsection, must pay an additional ~~((fifty))~~ seventy-  
3 five cents, which must be collected and remitted to the state treasurer  
4 ~~((for deposit))~~ and distributed as follows:

5 (i) Fifty cents must be deposited into the department of licensing  
6 services account of the motor vehicle fund~~((Revenue deposited into~~  
7 ~~this account))~~ and must be used for agent and subagent support, which  
8 is to include but not be limited to the replacement of department-owned  
9 equipment in the possession of agents and subagents.

10 (ii) Twenty-five cents must be deposited into the license plate  
11 technology account created under section 4 of this act.

12 (5) A subagent shall collect a service fee of (a) eight dollars and  
13 fifty cents for changes in a certificate of ownership, with or without  
14 registration renewal, or verification of record and preparation of an  
15 affidavit of lost title other than at the time of the title application  
16 or transfer and (b) three dollars and fifty cents for registration  
17 renewal only, issuing a transit permit, or any other service under this  
18 section.

19 (6) If the fee is collected by the state patrol as agent for the  
20 director, the fee so collected shall be certified to the state  
21 treasurer and deposited to the credit of the state patrol highway  
22 account. If the fee is collected by the department of transportation  
23 as agent for the director, the fee shall be certified to the state  
24 treasurer and deposited to the credit of the motor vehicle fund. All  
25 such fees collected by the director or branches of his office shall be  
26 certified to the state treasurer and deposited to the credit of the  
27 highway safety fund.

28 (7) Any county revenues that exceed the cost of providing vehicle  
29 licensing and vessel registration and title activities in a county,  
30 calculated in accordance with the procedures in subsection (3)(d) of  
31 this section, shall be expended as determined by the county legislative  
32 authority during the process established by law for adoption of county  
33 budgets.

34 (8) The director may adopt rules to implement this section.

35 NEW SECTION. Sec. 4. A new section is added to chapter 46.16 RCW  
36 to read as follows:

37 The license plate technology account is created in the state

1 treasury. All receipts collected under RCW 46.01.140(4)(e)(ii) must be  
2 deposited into this account. Expenditures from this account must  
3 support current and future license plate technology and systems  
4 integration upgrades for both the department and correctional  
5 industries. Moneys in the account may be spent only after  
6 appropriation. Additionally, the moneys in this account may be used to  
7 reimburse the motor vehicle account for any appropriation made to  
8 implement the digital license plate system.

9 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** A new section is added to chapter 46.16 RCW  
10 to read as follows:

11 The department shall offer license plate design services to  
12 organizations that are sponsoring a new special license plate series or  
13 are seeking to redesign the appearance of an existing special license  
14 plate series that they sponsored. In providing this service, the  
15 department must work with the requesting organization in determining  
16 the specific qualities of the new plate design and must provide full  
17 design services to the organization. The department shall collect from  
18 the requesting organization a fee of one thousand five hundred dollars  
19 for providing license plate design services. This fee includes one  
20 original license plate design and up to five additional renditions of  
21 the original design. If the organization requests the department to  
22 provide further renditions, in addition to the five renditions provided  
23 for under the original fee, the department shall collect an additional  
24 fee of five hundred dollars per rendition. All revenue collected under  
25 this section must be deposited into the license plate technology  
26 account created under section 4 of this act until such time as the  
27 financing necessary to implement a digital license plate system has  
28 been paid in full. After the financing has been paid in full, the  
29 revenue collected under this section shall be deposited into the  
30 multimodal transportation account.

31 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** Sections 2 and 3 of this act take effect for  
32 renewals that are due or become due on or after November 1, 2003.

33 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** If this act is not referenced by bill or



1 chapter number by June 30, 2003, in the omnibus transportation  
2 appropriations act, this act is null and void.

--- END ---