

**FY15 Budget Testimony (Assembly Budget Committee)
Raymond P. Martinez, Chairman and Chief Administrator**

Good morning Chairman Schaer and members of the committee. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to appear before you today. The Motor Vehicle Commission has spent the last year administering programs that help us better serve the citizens of our State now and in the future.

While customer service remains a top priority -- so too is protecting the integrity of our documents. While these core missions may sound like two distinct things, they are, in fact, so intertwined in our operations that each lays the foundation for the other. Let me explain.

I came before you last year as we were beginning a new high-tech security endeavor aimed at reducing fraud, protecting the integrity of our operations, and ensuring that our colleagues in law enforcement can have a high degree of confidence in the information that we provide and upon which they regularly rely. The first and largest phase of Operation Facial Scrub is now over as we have now scrubbed 24.5 million images in our photo repository. Over 2,200 cases of intentional identity fraud have been found and referred to law enforcement for action. Another 4,000 records have

been corrected in our system -- thereby preventing customer service problems at the counter when these customers eventually come into an agency.

In addition to working closely with our colleagues in the Division of Criminal Justice, we have also developed a coordinated effort through Operation Facial Scrub known as AIRS, the Aggregated Investigative Reporting Service. This is a system that allows information to be shared, strategically and securely, with local, state and federal government users in order to better coordinate criminal investigations based on the findings of Operation Facial Scrub. To date, almost 2,100 cases of suspected identity fraud have been posted to the AIRS website for allied state and federal agencies to vet. Some of the more interesting cases of fraud include:

- A suspended commercial bus driver from North Jersey who worked for a commercial bus company and obtained another commercial bus license in the name of a deceased man. He had a total of (6) six suspensions on his real driving record.
- A registered sex offender from South Jersey who obtained a fake license to drive a tanker truck after his license was permanently suspended for (5) five DUI convictions.

- A NY resident who obtained a NJ driver's license in someone else's name to commit bank fraud.
- A Central Jersey resident who obtained a license in someone else's name after his real license was suspended for (3) DUI convictions. He used his fake license to drive a truck. He was also wanted in the State of Florida on a charge of committing lewd acts with a minor and he had a parole violation in New York for illegally possessing numerous guns.

And now the nexus between enhanced security and customer service. By solidifying our confidence in the security and dependability of our driver records, we have also been able to say something to millions of customers that no customer service agency has been able to say before -- "STAY HOME." I am referring to our highly-successful Skip the Trip program. To date, over 840,000 customers have taken us up on our invitation to stay home and renew their driver's license through the mail. It's a good thing for them and it's an even better thing for those customers who will still have to come to an agency to conduct their business because there were quite literally 840,000 fewer customers in line before them.

I am pleased to report our wait times are down. In fact, wait times in our 10 busiest agencies are down approximately 45 percent. (USE OF CHARTS)

I should note the participation rate in this program has been 60 percent, so we believe that there is room for improvement.

In the next year, we will be inviting over 1.5 million citizens to use this new, convenient service. If our acceptance rate holds steady, roughly 1 million less people will be visiting our agencies statewide.

Despite these impressive numbers, there is still a need for facilities around our state to service customers. This is why we continue to invest in full-service, modernized agencies built on state-owned land in key areas and move away from smaller limited-service offices in leased locations. This effort of modernization will move next to the communities of Wayne and Newark where we have initiated plans for similar construction.

Additionally, we're moving forward with expansions and renovations in other critical areas throughout the state to provide greater convenience to customers. Our Paterson Agency has received an upgrade as we increase space by more than 3,600 square feet in order to better accommodate our

suspension and restoration services in the northern region. Our once small agency that held only 60 people in it at a time can now accommodate almost 350. Renovations at the Cardiff Agency were finished this past summer and the public is enjoying the more accessible space. In Eatontown, the agency will receive a significant renovation as we modernize the site to improve operational workflow.

In addition to overall improvements to the customer service experience, the MVC has also focused on another segment of the population who needs a little extra help to make sure that when they leave their house to buy a loaf of bread they can, in fact, find a parking spot reserved for their use.

We've all seen it. Look at any parking lot across this country and you will find able-bodied drivers parked in specially-designated spots who should not be there. Some use the credentials of a family member – or even a deceased relative. With so much abuse, and blatant disregard for the needs of persons with disabilities, it was time to act. And thanks to action by the Legislature and the Governor, and with assistance and support from our friends at the NJ Division of Disability Services, Disability Rights of New Jersey, and the Brain Injury Alliance of New Jersey, we have made great

improvements in fighting this type of fraud and abuse that directly impacts the most vulnerable among us.

As of August 1, people with disabilities will recertify their medical qualification with the Motor Vehicle Commission every three years that they, in fact, continue to have the disabling condition and need the placard they hang from their rear-view mirror of their vehicle, and or, their wheelchair symbol license plate. Motorists with qualifying disabilities have welcomed this change now that they understand it is designed to help them. There are commonsense changes to the hanging placard as well.

New placards have an expiration date prominently printed and displayed – such as the one seen here. This small but important change should help to further weed out abuse. We've also spent a great deal of time updating our website to make it easier for motorists to find the necessary information, answer questions and obtain the new forms. And finally, we have designed a mailing piece that accompanies placard registration renewals to the State's half a million motorists with disabilities.

The Commission is always looking for opportunities to partner with other state agencies to provide service and increase value to our mutual customers. This is why when our colleagues at the Office of the Attorney General and the state Parole Board asked us to assist with their Fugitive Safe Surrender event in November, we wanted to help those who wanted to straighten out their records do so in a safe environment. The event enabled wanted individuals to come to a neutral location and voluntarily surrender to authorities. In return, they received favorable consideration from the courts -- not amnesty, but generally, a reduced sentence and a reduction in their fines, when applicable. A large number of these individuals had motor vehicle-related issues. We processed transactions at the event helping these customers clear a path to licensure, jobs, and a fresh start. We also work with our colleagues at the Department of Corrections on a regular basis to prepare prisoners to re-enter society with a driver's license in hand.

As you can see, we service a diverse population. Whether we're dealing with our typical customer conducting a driver's license renewal or a trucking company registering a fleet of vehicles, understanding the needs of a customer is essential. This is why the MVC has expanded its public

outreach efforts in order to maintain an open line of communication with those it serves. With our popular *Wisdom Behind the Wheel* mature driver program, I've had the opportunity to visit 24 senior communities and reach over 800 seniors around the state with partners from Highway Traffic Safety, DOT, AAA and the NJ Academy of Ophthalmology to have a conversation about safe driving at every age. At functions with Rotary Clubs, Employer Legislative Committees, Chambers of Commerce and trade and professional associations, business leaders have discussed with me what would help their industries excel. We work hand-in-hand with our law enforcement partners through regular meetings, as well as through fraud training conducted by our knowledgeable security professionals. I would welcome any invitations to extend these outreach events to any organizations in your legislative districts.

These are but a few of the many ways that the MVC communicates with its customers. Each driver, parent, bus operator, truck driver, police officer, pedestrian is a critical partner in helping us to gather information that is used to make us a better, more responsive organization.

I am proud of our accomplishments and I look forward to continuing our work as we push the Commission forward, ensuring that the MVC is well-positioned for serving its customers tomorrow, next year, and in the decades ahead.

I want to thank Chairman Schaer and members of this committee for the opportunity to testify today. I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.