

TESTIMONY

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Thank you for allowing Swanton Sector to weigh in on this proposed legislation outlining the numerous concerns from a law enforcement perspective.

The pros of going to one plate includes potential cost savings, and concerns for aesthetics.

The list of cons is much more exhaustive. Those thoughts are addressed in my testimony.

- Swanton Sector Agents primarily rely on human recognition in the performance of their duties. This means agents must make split second decisions based upon the information that they have in front of them. While on routine patrol agents may encounter port run-bys, vehicles being utilized in smuggling attempts, lookouts, etc. Agents need to be able to identify a vehicle's registration while traveling in the opposite direction as the target vehicle. This helps the agent identify the vehicle, which can help determine if a vehicle stop is made or not. There is no such thing as a routine vehicle stop, and immediate vehicle identification helps to optimize officer safety. Specific to BP operations - Agents responding to various callouts (i.e. port run-bys, other agency lookouts) can use the front Vermont plate to eliminate legitimate travelers operating a vehicle with a matching description of the target without having to waste valuable response time turning around on it. For example, a POE calls out a Canadian plated vehicle passing the port. With reasonable accuracy, the agent can eliminate vehicles with a front Vermont plate from suspicion even if it similar in description to the vehicle fleeing the POE. An agent needing verification of a registration may radio ahead to another unit to observe the front plate for the registration and identification of the vehicle.
- In the northern climate, a vehicle's rear plate is often snow covered, concealing the registration, which factors in to the scenarios outlined in the previous bullet. Additionally, this can cause issues/delays at the international border, when OFO is unable to correctly read the license plate(s). This slowdown has the potential to cause delays at the Port of Entry, which goes against the idea of facilitating lawful trade and travel as efficiently, and safely, as possible. These delays may unintentionally cause less visitors to come to Vermont, which could mean less revenue being generated.
- Criminals do not always swap out both plates on stolen vehicles or vehicles involved in criminal activity. Conflicting front and rear plates lead to greater reasonable suspicion of illegal activity.

- Agencies equipped with license plate readers have a greater ability to locate a vehicle based on the license plate information.
- Any extra ability for an agent or any law enforcement officer to obtain critical information on a motor vehicle involved in an incident is paramount to the successful resolution of the incident.
- With remote surveillance technology, agents may only have photographs or video of the front of a vehicle. The front plate would allow for easier identification of the vehicle involved in the suspicious activity.

Conclusion: From a national security/law enforcement perspective, Swanton Sector would recommend that the State of Vermont not enact the legislation proposing one license plate, instead of two, based upon the reasons outlined above. These reasons greatly outweigh the potential minimal cost savings and vehicle aesthetics concerns.

Thank you for your time.

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