

DMV's RESPONSE TO DPB's ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS OF THE PROPOSED VIRGINIA DRIVER TRAINING SCHOOL REGULATIONS

As outlined in the economic impact analysis of the Department of Planning and Budget (DPB), the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) is proposing to repeal its existing driver training school regulations and promulgate new regulations. The purpose of these actions is to address the needs of novice drivers of passenger vehicles and commercial motor vehicles, and the driving public in general, in an ever-changing, increasingly dangerous driver environment.

The driving environment in Virginia and the rest of the nation has changed substantially over recent years. Among other things, there have been increases in:

- The number of drivers and vehicular traffic;
- The number of larger, heavier weight vehicles, both private and commercial;
- The number and type of in-car distractions that confront the driver; and
- The incidence of road rage.

DMV licenses Class A (commercial motor vehicle training) and Class B (passenger vehicle training) driver training schools. Instruction and curriculum standards and practices as well as overall business practices at driver training schools for commercial and passenger vehicle drivers must effectively respond to these changes in order to provide thorough, up-to-date driver education and maintain the safest driving environment possible. Without proper, reasonable oversight, driver training schools could very well produce inadequately trained commercial and passenger vehicle drivers. These inadequately trained drivers could then end up operating vehicles throughout the Commonwealth, posing a significant health and safety threat to themselves and other drivers.

Recent statutory changes (Chapter 587 of the 2004 Virginia Acts of Assembly) and the proposed regulatory changes are intended to enhance DMV's oversight activities and ensure that graduates of these schools are adequately prepared to safely and independently operate motor vehicles on the public roadways. The overall regulatory goals are to:

- Strengthen DMV training school standards and develop additional standards to ensure that the instruction provided is uniform and meets all established requirements;
- Strengthen DMV's oversight process to ensure that reviews of training documentation are consistent, evaluation of school curriculums is expanded, and school audits are more comprehensive and less burdensome on driver training course providers; and
- Implement additional changes intended to ensure that consistently high quality instruction is provided across the driver training school system and that the learning environment for younger students is safe, secure and peer-oriented.

DMV believes the DPB economic impact analysis embraces and supports these goals and intentions, and concurs with that analysis and the conclusions it is able to make at this time.