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HOUSE BILL 56

56TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2023

INTRODUCED BY

William "Bill" R. Rehm and Gail Chasey and Marian Matthews

AN ACT

RELATING TO LICENSE PLATES; REQUIRING MOTOR VEHICLES TO DISPLAY
FRONT END LICENSE PLATES; REQUIRING ISSUANCE OF REGISTRATION
PLATES AND STICKERS UPON TRANSFER OF MOTOR VEHICLE OWNERSHIP;
INCREASING LICENSE PLATE FEES; MAKING AN APPROPRIATION.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO:

SECTION 1. Section 66-3-10 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1978,
Chapter 35, Section 30, as amended) is amended to read:

"66-3-10. DEPARTMENT TO ISSUE CERTIFICATE OF TITLE,
EVIDENCE OF REGISTRATION, REGISTRATION [~~PLATE~~] PLATES AND
VALIDATION [~~STICKER~~] STICKERS--RELEASE OF LIEN--ODOMETER
STATEMENT.--

A. The department, upon registration of a vehicle,
shall issue a certificate of title and evidence of
registration; an odometer statement may appear on one or both

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1 of these documents.

2 B. Except for certificates of title issued pursuant
3 to Section 66-3-2, 66-3-27 or 66-3-423 NMSA 1978 and for
4 manufactured homes, school buses, state government vehicles,
5 motorcycles and off-highway motor vehicles, upon issuance of a
6 new certificate of title or upon transfer of a certificate of
7 title, the department shall issue [~~a~~] two registration [~~plate~~]
8 plates and [~~a~~] two validation [~~sticker~~] stickers to the owner
9 of the vehicle.

10 C. The registration evidence shall be delivered to
11 the owner and shall contain upon its face the date issued, the
12 name and address of the owner, the registration number assigned
13 to the owner and such description of the vehicle registered to
14 the owner as determined by the secretary.

15 D. The certificate of title shall contain the
16 identical information required on the registration evidence and
17 in addition a statement of the owner's title and of all liens
18 and encumbrances upon the vehicle.

19 E. The certificate of title shall contain a space
20 for the release of any lien, space for assignment of title or
21 interest and warranty by the owner and space for notation of
22 liens and encumbrances upon the vehicle at the time of
23 transfer.

24 F. The certificate of title shall be delivered to
25 the owner in the event no lien or encumbrances appear thereon,

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1 otherwise the certificate of title shall be delivered to the
2 person named to receive it in the application for certificate.

3 G. Whenever the owner of a vehicle subject to
4 registration transfers the person's title or interest in the
5 vehicle to a nonresident who desires to title the vehicle in
6 the state of the nonresident's residence, the department upon
7 receiving application and the payment of the proper fee shall
8 issue a certificate of title only and record on the certificate
9 all liens and encumbrances."

10 SECTION 2. Section 66-3-14 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1978,
11 Chapter 35, Section 34, as amended) is amended to read:

12 "66-3-14. REGISTRATION PLATES OR VALIDATING STICKERS TO
13 BE FURNISHED BY DEPARTMENT--REFLECTIVE MATERIAL.--

14 A. Except as provided in Subsection B of this
15 section, the department upon registering a vehicle shall issue
16 [a] two registration [~~plate or a~~] plates and two validating
17 [~~sticker~~] stickers to the owner of the vehicle. The validating
18 [~~sticker~~] stickers may be designed and required to be placed on
19 the registration [~~plate~~] plates or elsewhere on the vehicle as
20 prescribed by the department.

21 B. For motor vehicles registered pursuant to
22 Section 66-3-27 or 66-3-423 NMSA 1978 and for trailers,
23 semitrailers, pole trailers, manufactured homes, school buses,
24 state government vehicles, motorcycles and off-highway motor
25 vehicles, the department upon registering the vehicle shall

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1 issue a registration plate and a validating sticker to the
2 owner of the vehicle. The validating sticker may be designed
3 and required to be placed on the registration plate or
4 elsewhere on the vehicle as prescribed by the department.

5 ~~[B.]~~ C. Each registration plate shall have a
6 background of reflective material such that the registration
7 number assigned to the vehicle is plainly legible from a
8 distance of one hundred feet at night. The colors shall
9 include those of the state flag, except prestige and special
10 plates.

11 ~~[C.]~~ D. Each registration plate shall have
12 displayed upon it:

13 (1) the registration number assigned to the
14 person to whom it was issued; and

15 (2) the name of this state.

16 ~~[D.]~~ E. The department shall issue no registration
17 plates for privately owned vehicles that contain the words
18 "staff officer" or any other title except as otherwise provided
19 by law.

20 ~~[E.]~~ F. All registration plates for private
21 vehicles shall be alike in form except for the owner's
22 registration number. The department shall adopt registration
23 number systems for registration plates.

24 ~~[F.]~~ G. In lieu of or in addition to a registration
25 plate or sticker for commercial motor vehicles, the department

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1 may issue an electronic identifying device."

2 SECTION 3. Section 66-3-17 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1978,
3 Chapter 35, Section 37, as amended) is amended to read:

4 "66-3-17. REGISTRATION [~~PLATE~~] RENEWAL--REPLACEMENT OF
5 [~~PLATE~~] PLATES--VALIDATING STICKERS.--

6 A. Succeeding registration renewals of [~~the~~]
7 registration [~~plate~~] plates issued [~~under~~] pursuant to Section
8 66-3-14 NMSA 1978 shall cause the division to issue [~~a~~]
9 validating [~~sticker~~] stickers only, except as provided in
10 Subsections B [~~and C~~] through D of this section.

11 B. The person to whom the [~~plate is~~] plates are
12 issued may, at any time, apply for the issuance of [~~a~~]
13 duplicate or replacement [~~plate~~] plates, and upon the surrender
14 of the registration [~~plate he~~] plates the person then has,
15 along with the payment of a reasonable fee set by the
16 [~~director~~] secretary that will cover the cost of the production
17 and distribution of the [~~plate~~] plates, the applicant shall be
18 issued [~~a~~] duplicate or replacement [~~plate~~] plates.

19 C. [~~Any~~] A peace officer may, upon discovering that
20 [~~the~~] a registration plate of [~~any~~] a vehicle is illegible
21 because of wear or damage or other cause, issue a citation to
22 the owner or operator of the vehicle. The citation shall
23 provide that the owner shall, within thirty days from the date
24 of the citation, apply for and obtain [~~a~~] duplicate or
25 replacement [~~plate~~] plates from the division.

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1 D. Except for vehicles qualifying for registration
2 pursuant to Subsection B of Section 66-3-14 NMSA 1978, a
3 registration renewal for a vehicle that had been issued one
4 registration plate pursuant to Section 66-3-14 NMSA 1978 prior
5 to July 1, 2027 shall cause the department to issue two
6 replacement registration plates for the vehicle."

7 SECTION 4. Section 66-3-18 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1978,
8 Chapter 35, Section 38, as amended) is amended to read:

9 "66-3-18. DISPLAY OF REGISTRATION PLATES AND TEMPORARY
10 REGISTRATION PERMITS--DISPLAYS PROHIBITED AND ALLOWED.--

11 A. [~~The registration plate~~] Except for vehicles
12 registered pursuant to Subsection B of Section 66-3-14 NMSA
13 1978, registration plates shall be attached to the front and
14 rear of the vehicle for which [~~it is~~] they are issued.
15 [~~however, the registration plate shall be attached to the front~~
16 ~~of a road tractor or truck tractor. The~~] Each plate shall be
17 securely fastened at all times in a fixed horizontal position
18 at a height of not less than twelve inches from the ground,
19 measuring from the bottom of [~~the~~] each plate. [~~It~~] Each plate
20 shall be in a place and position so as to be clearly visible,
21 and [~~it~~] they shall be maintained free from foreign material
22 and in a condition to be clearly legible.

23 B. For vehicles registered pursuant to Subsection B
24 of Section 66-3-14 NMSA 1978, the registration plate shall be
25 attached to the rear of the vehicle for which it is issued.

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1 ~~[B-]~~ C. A demonstration or temporary registration
2 permit shall be firmly affixed to the inside left rear window
3 of the vehicle to which it is issued, unless such display
4 presents a safety hazard or the demonstration or temporary
5 registration permit is not visible or readable from that
6 position, in which case, the demonstration or temporary
7 registration permit shall be displayed in such a manner that it
8 is clearly visible from the rear or left side of the vehicle.

9 ~~[G-]~~ D. No vehicle while being operated on the
10 highways of this state shall have displayed either on the front
11 or the rear of the vehicle any registration plate, including
12 validating sticker, other than ~~[one]~~ those issued or validated
13 for the current registration period by the department or any
14 other licensing authority having jurisdiction over the vehicle.
15 No expired registration plate or validating sticker shall be
16 displayed on the vehicle. ~~[other than an expired special~~
17 ~~registration plate, which may be exhibited on the front of the~~
18 ~~vehicle.]~~

19 ~~D. Nothing contained in this section shall be~~
20 ~~construed as prohibiting the use of a promotional or~~
21 ~~advertising plate on the front of the vehicle.]~~

22 E. A violation of a provision of this section is a
23 penalty assessment misdemeanor."

24 SECTION 5. A new section of Chapter 66, Article 6 NMSA
25 1978 is enacted to read:

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