



Colonel G. Jerry Russell
Director

Idaho State Police

Service Since 1939



C.L. "Butch" Otter
Governor

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HAND DELIVERY

The Honorable Dean Cameron, Co-Chair
The Honorable Maxine Bell, Co-Chair
Task Force to Identify Alternative Funding Sources
JFAC Meeting Room

Dear Senator Cameron and Representative Bell:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide the Idaho State Police perspective to this committee on alternative funding options. I would much prefer to appear before you in person; since I can't, I appreciate your receiving my written comments.

A number of innovative, yet realistic, alternative revenue sources to support the ISP have been proposed and discussed by this committee. All of us at ISP are grateful to you for your serious consideration of each of them.

I know you must evaluate each proposal within a logical framework. You must consider whether or not there is a defensible nexus between the revenue source and the activities it supports; to what degree it will be acceptable to the public; whether it is likely to support continuing needs; and whether it can be implemented in a timely manner and without undue additional structure.

In reviewing the proposed alternative revenue sources against these criteria, two rise immediately to the top, in my opinion.

I consider the best fit to be an increase in vehicle registration fees of \$16.00 per year, netting just over \$24M. ISP's largest public safety activity is patrolling Idaho's highways and the interstate within our state's borders. Those activities include responding to crashes, identifying and arresting criminals traveling through our state, identifying and removing from the highways drunk and otherwise intoxicated drivers, aggressive drivers, inattentive drivers, and performing motorist assists. All of those activities involve vehicles and drivers.

While I acknowledge that any increase in any fee affects the public paying that fee, the nexus here appears clear. Increases in population mean increases in vehicles on the roads. Increases in vehicles on the roads require increased vigilance and assistance to keep motorists safe. ISP has hard data for revenue projections tied to this source.

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EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

Implementation of this revenue increase should be nearly transparent. ISP currently receives \$3.00 from each vehicle registration into the Project CHOICE dedicated fund established in Idaho Code 49-454. Mechanisms to transfer the funds from their receipt by the Idaho Transportation Department to the ISP are already in place. A change in Code will be necessary to allow the dedicated fund to receive this revenue for its specific purpose.

Why a \$16.00 increase? As you know, the Patrol program has significant, essential capital outlay and operating expense needs in addition to necessary personnel funding. The \$24M-\$25M this source could generate would permit fully staffing and equipping ISP's current Patrol FTP count, allow for replacing approximately 1/3 of the Patrol fleet annually as well as other necessary CO items such as mountain-top repeaters, weapons, computers and other items. Additionally, the revenue would provide funding for fuel and vehicle maintenance, ammunition and other law enforcement equipment needs.

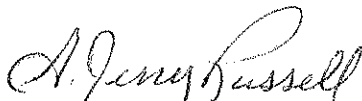
Another front runner among the alternatives is the proposal for a vehicle insurance surcharge of \$16.00 annually. The nexus to Patrol activities is the same as for the registration increase. In terms of the public's response to such an increase, Idaho currently has the fourth-lowest automobile insurance rates in the country, according to the Twin Falls *Times News*. While an increase might not be welcome, it would be defensible.

The surcharge would generate approximately the same amount as the proposed vehicle registration increase, and it would impact the Patrol program in the same manner. A dedicated account to receive the revenue from the charging entity would be required in Idaho Code, and a mechanism for moving the funds into the dedicated account would likewise be necessary.

Regardless of the source of revenue for Patrol activities, I will commit to you as I have previously, that ISP will continue to provide high quality public safety and law enforcement services to the greatest degree possible with the funding provided.

Please feel free to contact me with any further requests or questions you may have. I can be reached at (208) 884-7003 or jerry.russell@isp.idaho.gov.

Sincerely,


Colonel G. Jerry Russell
Director

GJR:AC:jm