

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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REPORT TO THE FIRST SESSION OF THE
ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHTEENTH LEGISLATURE'S
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

LICENSE PLATE DESIGN AND PRODUCTION



PREFACE

Perhaps no other public policy issue evokes such lively public discussion as does the issue of “license plates.” Plate design is debated in coffee shops and in the Legislature, and school children and civic groups develop and sponsor their favorite designs. Low digit plates are coveted, and cherished numbers even are passed from one generation to the next. Citizens vie to see who can sport the most clever vanity plate slogan. Motorists use their license plates to proclaim their philosophies, affinities, goals, and desires. Nearly every Maine adult and Maine business registers vehicles, and therefore has an opinion regarding license plate design.

These political issues often obscure the license plate’s primary functions: to uniquely identify individual vehicles and owners for law enforcement purposes; to improve public safety; and to help to ensure the proper collection of vehicle taxes and fees.

The Maine Motor Vehicle Bureau’s registration database contains well in excess of a million registration records. This database is used by law enforcement, insurance companies, highway planners, cities and towns, the federal government, and others for various official and public purposes. As with any large, complex database, the BMV database needs to be aggressively managed to purge obsolete records, and to generally maintain the database quality. Issuing new registration plates is one effective tool to keep this important database up-to-date.

These are some of the issues the License Plate Task Force kept in mind as it carried out its deliberations. The following report identifies the major issues and constraints associated with a new license plate issue. The Task Force concentrated on the plate manufacturing process and plate design. All recommendations are intended to carry out the law’s mandate of a new general issue starting in July 1999, while minimizing the impact on public resources and convenience.

The Task Force recognizes that not everyone will be satisfied with these recommendations. Some will want a more colorful replacement plate. Others may prefer a more modern production system. Yet others may want the moratorium on specialty plates lifted. However, the Task Force’s recommendations are the result of consensus decisions, reached only after lengthy deliberations. The Task Force believes these recommendations to be the most prudent at this time.

The Task Force would like to thank publicly all who contributed their technical expertise on the plate manufacturing process, as well as those citizens who suggested license plate designs. We hope that in the end, Maine citizens will appreciate and enjoy their new plates for many years.

Senator William O’Gara, Chair
License Plate Task Force

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INTRODUCTION

A License Plate Committee was formed at the request of the One Hundred and Seventeenth Legislature's Transportation Committee. (Refer to the June 27, 1995, letter from the Co-chairs). Meetings were held monthly from August 1995, through January 1996. This committee identified and examined many issues surrounding the entire license plate system.

Considerable discussion was held concerning plate manufacturing technology. All committee members toured the Plate Shop facility in Warren, Maine. Details of the decal system were provided by the State of Utah.

Public comments were collected and reviewed.

Several questions were raised which needed to be answered by the Legislature before the committee could complete its task, including:

1. Will there be a new general issue or a gradual implementation of a new plate?
2. Will the general issue be funded in advance, and how?
3. Specialty plate requests were putting a strain on public services personnel and administrative services resources. Will the Legislature put a hold on these until new guidelines can be established?
4. Will the Legislature allow the committee to continue to meet in an official capacity?

In January 1996, a verbal report was given to the Transportation Committee with recommendations for legislation which would establish a date for a new plate issue, provide funding through a \$1.00 increase in the registration fee, place a moratorium on specialty plate requests and formally establish the License Plate Task Force. Membership of the Task Force was slightly different than that of the Committee. (See Appendix A for membership list of Committee, and Appendix B for membership list of Task Force.)

Response from the Transportation Committee and the Legislature came in section C-15 of Public Law 451. The License Plate Task Force was made official and assigned a mission.

MISSION - CURRENT MAINE STATUTE

This Task Force's mission was detailed in Title 29-A MRSA §451, sub-§4 & 6 which read:

4. Purpose of task force. The task force shall study issues relating to the design and production of license plates and make recommendations to the Legislature for the new general plate issue beginning July 1, 1999. In conducting the study the task force shall examine the following:

- a. The task force shall evaluate the existing equipment at the Warren prison facility, its adequacy for meeting plate production demand and the costs of overhauling that equipment prior to a new general issue. The task force shall examine state-of-the-art technology for in-house graphics creation and production of specialty plates. The task force shall consider costs of new equipment and the impact of various types of equipment on production capabilities and on jobs at the prison facility.
- b. The task force shall consider methods of assigning unique identifiers to license plates. The task force shall consider use of a stacked letter system to allow duplication of numbers among different types of plates. The task force shall make recommendations as to the use of a single numbering system or a system that allows duplication.
- c. The task force shall consider designs for a new general issue plate to replace the lobster plate design. The task force shall use the plate design standards of the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators in developing or evaluating designs. The task force shall present design alternatives to the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation before making a recommendation on plate design.

6. Report. The task force shall submit a report including findings, recommendations and proposed legislation to the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation and to the Executive Director of the Legislative Council no later than November 1, 1996. The task force shall submit legislation to implement its recommendations to the Revisor of Statutes no later than January 1, 1997. The report must include a proposed plate design for the new general issue, recommendations for the registration classes required to display the new general issue plates and for the specialty plates to remain in use concurrent with the new general issue.

A copy of the complete Title 29-A MRSA §451 is attached in Appendix C.

FUNCTIONS OF LICENSE PLATES

The Task Force has agreed upon four major functions of license plates:

1. **LAW ENFORCEMENT IDENTIFICATION** - The primary purpose of license plates is for effective vehicle identification to aid law enforcement in crime prevention and detection, as well as traffic control. Highly legible, distinctive reflectorized license plates provide the best method of identifying motor vehicles.
2. **PUBLIC SAFETY** - Fully reflectorized license plates greatly increase the visibility of all vehicles at night and in poor weather, including parked or disabled vehicles, from both the front and rear.
3. **REVENUE** - The license plate provides visible proof that the vehicle owner has met all state legal registration requirements, and paid all state and municipal fees. Specialty plates contribute additional revenue to the state and/or organizations.
4. **STATE PRIDE AND PROMOTION** - The display of appealing distinctive license plates will announce every driver's Maine pride, and promote a positive image of Maine both nationwide and internationally.

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF MOTOR VEHICLE ADMINISTRATORS STANDARDS ACCEPTED

AS INSTRUCTED BY PUBLIC LAW, THE TASK FORCE AGREED TO ABIDE BY THE FOLLOWING AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF MOTOR VEHICLE ADMINISTRATORS (AAMVA) STANDARDS:

1. **ALREADY IN PLACE WITH THE CURRENT GENERAL ISSUE PLATES:**
 - a. **TWO LICENSE PLATES *** - Two license plates should be issued for all passenger type vehicles and single unit trucks. One plate can be issued for commercial tractors, motorcycles, and all types of trailers.
 - b. **STANDARD SIZE PLATES** - License plates should be manufactured in two sizes, depending on their use. Passenger type vehicles, tractors, trucks, trailers, etc., should be issued standard 6" x 12" plates. Smaller plates measuring 4" x 7" may be used on motorcycles or other small vehicles.
 - c. **REFLECTORIZED PLATES** - Reflectorized license plates should be adopted and used.
2. **BEING ACCEPTED BY THE EXISTING TASK FORCE:**
 - a. **LAW ENFORCEMENT SHOULD BE CONSULTED** - Motor vehicle agencies should consult with jurisdictional, and if applicable local law enforcement representatives, prior to adopting new license plate standards or design.
 - b. **PLATE FORMATS SHOULD BE STANDARDIZED** - Jurisdictions should use standardized format for all license plates, including specialty plates.
 - c. **DISCOURAGE THE DUPLICATION OF ALPHA-NUMERIC COMBINATIONS** - Duplication of alpha-numeric combinations is discouraged to allow accurate retrieval of vehicle registration information.
 - d. **READABLE AT MINIMUM OF 75 FEET** - License plates must be readable in daylight and night using low beam headlights, under optimum conditions at a distance of no less than 75 feet.

*** A NOTE ON SINGLE V.S. DOUBLE PLATES** - Some states are considering the elimination of the front license plate to save on production costs, despite the AAMVA standards and the handicap to law enforcement efforts. The Maine law enforcement members of the Task Force have been adamant about retaining the two plate system for the vehicle identification for the detection of crime and law violators.

Although Maine could reduce the cost of issuing registration plates by an estimated \$300,000 per year, by converting from our current two plate system to a single rear plate, the Task Force fears that any savings may be offset by losses in vanity and specialty plate revenues. As a result, we could save money on plate materials and manufacturing, yet suffer a net loss of revenue coming into the Highway and General Funds.

ANALYSIS OF
ACTIVE LOBSTER LICENSE PLATES
COMPARED TO
NUMBER OF LOBSTER PLATES DISTRIBUTED -

1987 - 1996

YEAR OF DISTRIBUTION OF LOBSTER PLATES TO MUNICIPAL & BRANCH OFFICES	NUMBER OF LOBSTER PLATES DISTRIBUTED TO MUNICIPAL & BRANCH OFFICES	NUMBER OF LOBSTER PLATES STILL ACTIVE AS OF 12/1/96	PERCENT OF LOBSTER PLATES STILL ACTIVE AS OF 12/1/96*	PERCENT OF TOTAL LOBSTER PLATES STILL ACTIVE AS OF 12/1/96
1987	410,162	88,325	21.5%	12.2%
1988	467,480	118,250	25.3%	16.3%
1989	192,273	31,072	16.2%	4.3%
1990	167,012	52,492	31.4%	7.2%
1991	180,957	49,004	27.1%	6.7%
1992	139,886	48,309	34.5%	6.7%
1993	257,274	101,354	39.4%	14.0%
1994	56,194	37,264	66.3%	5.1%
1995	134,937	98,646	73.1%	13.6%
1996	141,236	102,002	72.2%	14.0%
TOTAL	2,147,411	726,718	33.8%	100.0%

* Percent Still Active equals Number Still Active divided by the Number manufactured each year.

NOTE: Above numbers do not include Reserved, Low Digit or Vanity plate figures.

LICENSE PLATE MANUFACTURING PROCESS

FINDINGS

The Task Force evaluated three license plate production methods and four vendors: the current method used at the Warren prison facility, one newer method in use in New York state since April of 1995, and one method only in pre-production stage in the state of Missouri. A COMPARISON OF The findings were summarized in the chart in Appendix D.

RECOMMENDATION - THE NEW GENERAL ISSUE PLATES SHOULD BE PRODUCED USING THE CURRENT METHOD. This method is now in use in forty-nine states, for at least some of their plate production. Maine has manufactured plates with this basic technology since 1964, and is now operating a plate production facility in a 30' x 100' building located at the Warren prison.

1. **CURRENT MANUFACTURING METHOD -- BASIC STEPS** - The members of the Task Force have visited the State Prison facility in Warren for first hand observations of the live production line. A 20 minute video detailing the prison production process is available for review by the members of the Transportation Committee. A floor plan of the work area at the prison is attached as Appendix E.

Title 29-A MRSA §451, sub-§6 states:

6. Plates to be manufactured at the State Prison. The Secretary of State or the duly designated official in charge of the vehicle registration shall purchase and cause to be installed at the State Prison the necessary equipment and materials for the production of all vehicle registration plates used in the state.

The job of manufacturing license plates is completed with a staff of two guards supervising six Thomaston State Prison inmates, all of whom must be model prisoners within six months of their release date.

The basic steps involved are listed below:

- a. **RAW ALUMINUM** - Sheets of raw aluminum are delivered in rolls weighing 1200 - 2000 pounds. Every pound of aluminum produces about four plates.
- b. **HOT WATER TANK** - The rolls of aluminum are placed onto a reel that feeds the sheets through a hot water tank to clean and heat the metal.
- c. **STRAIGHTENING MACHINE** - The aluminum then passes through a straightening machine which removes all dents.
- d. **APPLICATOR** - The 3M applicator machine aligns the aluminum sheets with sheets of 3M Scotchlite laminate, which is applied to the warmed metal. Scotchlite is the brand name of a reflective sheeting, which comes in rolls and has adhesive on the back. We are currently using plain, two color graphic and four color graphic sheeting.
- e. **BLANKING PRESS** - The blanking press cuts the plates, rounds the corners and

cuts the holes at a rate of approximately one plate per second. **This machine is about 30 years old.**

- f. **CONVEYOR BELT/TRAY** - The plates come down a short conveyor belt where they are straightened and stacked by hand in trays holding 750 plate blanks each.
- g. **"NEW" HYDRAULIC PRESS** - All paired plates (issues requiring front and back plates) are processed on the "new" hydraulic press, which was purchased in 1986. The production rate can be as much as 700 pairs of plates per hour. Three people are needed to run the press:
 - i. **FEEDER** - One person feeds the plates through a safety feeder that prevents the operator's hands from entering the press.
 - ii. **OPERATOR** - A second person changes the letters and numbers manually for each set of two plates. As a safety feature, the operator must raise both hands up and press two large buttons to start the hydraulic press. A set of sample plates hangs on the wall for reference, so the press operator can set up the correct letter/number spacing and sequencing for each type of plate.
 - iii. **CATCH/INSPECT/STACK** - A third person catches the pressed plates as they come down a conveyor belt. He inspects each pair of plates to insure that the plates are being produced in sequence and that the press was a good one. He then stacks the plates.
- h. **"OLD" MECHANICAL PRESS** - All single plates (and rarely some paired plates) are processed on the mechanical press, **which was purchased in 1952**. It is much noisier than the hydraulic press, is expensive to repair, and breaks down often. The machine also normally requires three operators to run it. Maximum production rates are about 850 plates per hour. Motorcycle plates are produced by a single operator, but the process is much slower - about 800 plates per day.
- i. **NUMERAL COATER** - This machine (also known as a roller/coater and as a printer) applies opaque paint with a roller to all raised sections of each plate - the plate ID letters, numbers and rim. Two people must operate the numeral coater: one feeds the plates in and a second transfers them to a drying rack.
- j. **DRYING RACKS** - Each painted plate is manually placed on a drying rack.
- k. **OVEN** - The drying racks automatically circulate through an 250-degree oven located on the second floor of the plate shop. The entire drying trip takes about an hour.
- l. **COMPLETED PLATES** - Finished dry plates are manually removed from the drying racks.
- m. **SEALING MACHINE** - Every pair of plates plus each single plate issued is shrink wrapped in plastic. One man runs this machine.
- n. **PACKAGING** - Groups of either 25 pairs or 50 single plates are packaged for shipment.
- o. **PALLETS** - The packaged plates are placed in groups of 5000 plates onto pallets for shipping to the Bureau of Motor Vehicles Main Office in Augusta. All plates are then distributed from the Main Office Stockroom.
- p. **SCREEN PRINTING** - Although most Maine plates are produced at the prison, a

few types are sent to an outside vendor to be screen-printed. This is done because of the very low volume needed. These types include:

- i. **Veteran**
- ii. **Disabled Veteran**
- iii. **Pearl Harbor Survivor**
- iv. **Congressional Medal of Honor**
- v. **Former POW**

q. **STAFFING -**

- i. **CURRENT NORMAL** - One shift of six men each work 37.5 hours per week, for a total of 225 hours per week, and an average of 975 hours per month for normal production.
- ii. **PREVIOUS REISSUE** - During the last new plate reissue, the prison staff increased from its normal six men working an average of 910 total hours per month, to twelve men working an average of 1868 total hours per month for 20 months. Please refer to the "New Issue Statistics" section on page 12 for a more detailed review.
- iii. **FORECAST FOR NEXT REISSUE** - Similarly increased staffing needs are anticipated for the next general issue. Please refer to the "New Issue Statistics" section on page 12 for a more detailed review.

2. **NEWER METHODS - BASIC STEPS -**

- a. **COMPUTER GRAPHICS** prepared for plate design
- b. **COMPUTERIZED ORDERS** produce
- c. **PRE-NUMBERED LAMINATE**
- d. **THAT IS ADHERED TO FLAT ALUMINUM**
- e. **SHIPPING LABELS** are automatically generated from bar coding on laminate
- f. **PLATES ARE SHIPPED DIRECTLY TO CUSTOMERS**

3. **NEWER METHODS NOT TESTED -**

- a. **NOT LAB TESTED** - Of the two other manufacturing processes available for consideration, one is currently in production in New York state but samples were never sent to the University of Southern Maine laboratory for the required testing, despite the Task Force's repeated requests. The other method has not even started test production, and therefore had no sample available to send for testing.

NOTE: Copies of the University of Southern Maine's test results of the current method may be obtained from the Task Force upon request.

b. **NOT TIME TESTED -**

- i. **ON THE ROAD** - The one new manufacturing process that was reviewed by the Task Force and is in current production in the state of New York has only been issuing plates since November of 1995, so the plates have not spent significant time on vehicles.
- ii. **IN PRODUCTION** - The system is now being used only to produce New York specialty plates, and therefore has not been subjected to the rigors of the

high volume production that Maine's new general issue would require.

4. **OTHER NEWER METHODS MAY NOT BE APPROPRIATE FOR MAINE'S NEEDS**
 - a. **FOR A NEW GENERAL ISSUE** - The new systems are able to produce different plate types within the same run, a very convenient system for specialty plates. However, Maine needs to be able to efficiently produce large quantities of the same types of plates to fulfill the legal requirement for a new general issue.
 - b. **FOR SPECIALTY PLATES** - Maine does not need to own a manufacturing system that will enable us to produce all of our own specialty plates. Title 29-A MRSA §451, sub-§6 states: "... plates that cannot be produced at the prison and plates for which anticipated demand is below a minimum number determined by the Secretary of State may be purchased for state use." We have the option of contracting out the jobs for specialty plates if the current manufacturing system cannot be handled at the prison.
5. **INADEQUATE TIME TO PREPARE FOR NEW SYSTEM** - The manufacturing process for this new general issue should start approximately twelve to eighteen months in advance of the start of the plate issue because the prison staff will simultaneously be producing the regular volume of needed plates. New issue production therefore needs to start no later than July 1998, to comply with the required new issue start date of July 1, 1999. The Task Force felt that there is inadequate time remaining for all of the testing and training processes necessary for conversion to a new system.
6. **TOO RISKY TO TRY NEW SYSTEM AT TIME OF REISSUE** - By maintaining the current manufacturing system, the amount of unknown variables will be kept to a minimum.
7. **NEITHER OF THE NEWER SYSTEMS STUDIED WOULD BE EXPECTED TO PRODUCE SIGNIFICANT COST SAVINGS** - The actual cost per plate comparison of the current production system to the other methods is rather complex. The equipment is very expensive, while materials would cost less in the newer systems. In contrast, some equipment expenses on the current system are minimal (we are mostly replacing some mechanical equipment), while the price of supplies is higher. With the present production method, Maine is forced to use a single source vendor for the reflectorized Scotchlite (because the vendor "lends" the applicator at no charge and restricts the use of the applicator to their materials only), a better grade and heavier gauge of aluminum is required, production time will be slower, and more storage space is needed. The total current cost of a pair of general issue plates is approximately \$2.80 per pair.

COST OF EQUIPMENT UPGRADE

The Task Force recommends that the current production methods be used to manufacture the new general issue plates. However, much of the equipment in use at the Warren Prison Facility is antiquated and will need to be updated before the new issue production begins. The total cost estimates of \$308,450.00 for upgrading the equipment are detailed below.

ESTIMATED COSTS FOR REPLACING SOME EXISTING LICENSE PLATE PRODUCTION EQUIPMENT IN PREPARATION FOR A NEW GENERAL PLATE ISSUE

EQUIPMENT/PARTS DESCRIPTION	ESTIMATED COST
Workstations (3)	\$9,000.00
Power Lift	\$4,600.00
Pallet Jack (Electric)	\$6,000.00
L Sealer	\$4,050.00
Embossing Press - Including Installation	\$118,200.00
Brush Tank	\$16,800.00
Stock Straightener	\$19,200.00
Blanking Press and Die - Including Installation	\$70,100.00
Mechanical Roll Feed	\$9,400.00
Rebuilt M-31 Numeral Conveyor	\$16,800.00
Ink Circulator System	\$4,000.00
TOTAL ESTIMATED REFURBISHING COSTS	\$278,150.00

NEW PLATE ISSUE DISTRIBUTION

Distributing almost one million pairs of new license plates to Maine motor vehicle registrants is a major undertaking requiring substantial planning, logistical coordination, and additional staffing. Requests for reserved plates must be accepted and tracked. In addition, once the new plates are assigned, the Motor Vehicle Bureau must update each of its affected registration records. Additional temporary clerical staff will be hired to assist the Bureau's Public Services Division with the extra work. Based on its experience with the last general issue, the Bureau is proposing to handle the general reissue in the following manner.

PLATE REPLACEMENTS (RENEWALS) - New plates will be issued through the Motor Vehicle Bureau's branch offices and municipal offices authorized to issue re-registrations. New plates will be issued starting with the July 1999 renewals and will continue until all lobster plates are replaced. Anyone applying for a new registration will receive a new plate. Registration numbers will be assigned in sequence.

RESERVED PLATES/ VANITY PLATES - Registrants will be able to reserve their current registration number or vanity plate for a one time fee of fifteen dollars during a specified time, prior to the new plate issuance. The Bureau will make appropriate forms available in BMV branch offices, municipal offices, by telephone, and through the Bureau's world wide web site.

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED NUMBERS - Previously issued numbers and vanity plates not reserved by the prior registrant may be reissued to another registrant pursuant to the Bureau's procedures for low digit plates and vanity plates, after the registration has expired for six months.

OUT OF SEQUENCE - After the new plate issue is completed, any plate number not used may be requested in writing. If available, BMV will issue it for a one time fee of \$15.00.

NEW ISSUE STATISTICS

TIME SINCE PREVIOUS REISSUE - When the proposed reissue begins on 7/1/99, twelve years will have elapsed since the start of the lobster reissue on 7/1/87. Thirteen years had passed from the 7/1/74 black and white general issue before the lobster plate reissue began.

NUMBER OF PLATES TO BE PRODUCED - In addition to their regular volume of production, the prison shop will need to produce an estimated 875,000 pairs of plates (1,750,000 plates) in order to complete the new general issue.

REISSUE STAFFING

1. **PREVIOUS** - During the last new plate reissue, the size of the plate shop inmate staff increased from its usual six men each working 35 hour weeks, to twelve men working anywhere from 35 to 64 hours per week. The total **extra** hours worked from 8/86 through 7/88 was 19,802.
2. **PROPOSED** - For the upcoming reissue, the proposed plate shop plan is to schedule two shifts of six men who each will work 38.0 hours per week.

NEW STORAGE BUILDING

PREVIOUS REISSUE LEASE EXPENSES - The exact figures on the lease costs for the 1987 reissue are no longer available. However, \$20,000.00 was budgeted for lease expense; this number is probably close to the actual dollars spent.

NEEDS AND COSTS - The Task Force has identified a need for the construction of a storage facility for plate production materials plus finished plates. Based on preliminary estimates, the cost would be a maximum of \$85,000 to construct a 40' x 80' unheated steel with wood frame storage building at the Maine State Prison Facility in Warren, plus portable storage shelving. Since the new building will eliminate the need to lease storage space for a reissue, some (approximately \$20,000.00) of the construction costs will be offset by the lease savings.

The size of the building needed was based on the assumption that maximum storage needs will occur just prior to the release of the first 500,000 pairs (1,000,000 plates) of new issue plates in April of 1999, and that all materials necessary to complete the reissue have been received by that date.

Pallet Racks - Dimensions of one style are 4' x 4' x 12' each, and will hold two pallets each. One estimated cost of pallet racks = \$182.00 each x 54 racks = \$9,828.00.

Plates - 10,000 plates per pallet x 100 pallets = 1,000,000 plates. Need 50 pallet racks.

Aluminum - One pound of aluminum produces 4 plates. If the first 1,000,000 plates have already been produced, will need to store at least 93,750 (375,000/4) pounds of aluminum to produce the remaining 375,000 plates needed to complete the new issue. Each pallet can hold 1,500 pounds (one roll) of aluminum, which can be stored without pallet racks to a level 5 of pallets high for a total of 7,500 pounds of storage in a 4' x 4' x 12' area. Thirteen such areas (93,750/7,500) would need to be available to provide adequate aluminum storage space. All aluminum can be stored within existing storage areas.

Sheeting - Each roll of sheeting can produce 1,800 plates. Need 208 rolls (375,000/1,800) to produce the 375,000 remaining plates needed to complete the reissue. Each pallet can hold 27 rolls of sheeting. Need 8 pallets (208/27), stored on 4 pallet racks.

Current Available Storage Space - Fifteen rolls (stacked five high on three pallets) of aluminum will be kept in the production area at all times, to ensure that they are at the proper temperature before being processed. A portion of the barn on the Warren site is reserved for the plate shop's use, and can hold a maximum of 15 pallets. This would accommodate the rest of the required aluminum, 50 rolls stacked five high on 10 pallets. The remaining five pallet spaces can be used to hold sheeting or manufactured plates.

Proposed New Building - A 40' x 80' storage building could hold:

3 rows of 15 (4' x 4' x 12') pallet racks each, plus 6 racks along back wall = total of 51 pallet racks, 102 pallets.

Allow 4' for one small door along each of the two long side walls

Two fork lift aisles of 14' each

One 12' front fork lift/loading area with overhead doors

BUILDING REQUIREMENTS FOR NEW LICENSE PLATE PRODUCTION METHODS

- The newer methods of production may have required less storage space than the present system, making the construction of this large storage facility unnecessary. However, because of the computerized components of the newer systems, at least some portion of the production facility may have required improved climate controls -- involving significant construction expense.

NEW LICENSE PLATE TRANSPORT VEHICLE

The present license plate transport vehicle is a 1989 GMC panel truck, which will have an estimated 94,308 miles on it by 1/1/98. The license plate shop has requested that a new second vehicle be purchased, with an estimated cost of \$31,000, and with the increased room and weight capacity to hold four pallets side by side for increased efficiency (rather than the two pallet capacity panel truck in use now).

The license plate shop plans to keep and use both vehicles for license plate deliveries throughout the reissue period. This will avoid the need to rent a second transport vehicle, as was done during the last reissue.

PLATE TYPES THAT SHOULD BE REISSUED

ALL PLATE TYPES CURRENTLY DISPLAYING THE LOBSTER

1. Passenger
2. Disabled
3. Antique auto
4. Bus
5. Commercial
6. Commercial Tractor
7. Farm
8. Hire
9. Horseless Carriage
10. Street Rod
11. Equipment
12. Tractor
13. Motor Home
14. Disabled Motor Home
15. National Guard
16. Firefighter
17. Combination

PLATE TYPES THAT SHOULD *NOT* BE REISSUED

SPECIAL DESIGN PLATE TYPES - RECENTLY ISSUED:

1. Conservation
2. University
3. Veteran
4. Former POW
5. Pearl Harbor Survivor
6. Disabled Veteran
7. Medal of Honor
8. Apportioned (IRP)
9. Long Term Trailer
10. Purple Heart

NON-LOBSTER (NO DESIGN) PLATE TYPES - RECENTLY ISSUED:

1. Coach
2. Trailer
3. Municipal
4. County
5. Municipal Police
6. Sheriff
7. Motorcycle
8. Veteran Motorcycle
9. Disabled Motorcycle
10. Antique Motorcycle

NON-LOBSTER (BLACK ON WHITE) PLATES NOT REISSUED IN 1987/1988*:

1. State
2. State Motorcycle
3. University

* Every new state vehicle receives new plates. Existing plates are reissued every six years, and will be issued in February of 1998. Therefore, the Task Force believes there is no need to reissue these plates with the new general issue in 1999.

SPECIALTY PLATES

FINDINGS

Many requests and suggestions for new varieties of specialty plates are received on an ongoing basis as they continue to grow in popularity nationwide. The specialty plates already being issued in Maine have generated some revenue for their sponsoring groups. However, with the current technology, the Bureau of Motor Vehicles can handle only a limited number of specialty plate requests. Supplies are costly to purchase up front (and present a financial risk if the plates are not as popular as predicted), and inventories of plates manufactured in advance are expensive to store.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **MINIMUM ORDER OF 2,000 PAIRS - ENTIRELY PREPAID** - Only requests for new specialty plates with a fully prepaid initial order of at least 2,000 pairs of plates should be considered for production. The sponsoring organization will supply the names of all registrants; the BMV Main Office will disburse plates and update the computer system.
2. **ALL DESIGNS SHOULD MEET OVERALL GENERIC STYLE STANDARDS** - The Task Force agrees that the ability to easily identify Maine plates must not be compromised by allowing a proliferation of totally different specialty plate designs. Some standards must be put in place, such as requiring that all specialty plates have a white background with black lettering and green fading pine trees from the bottom, but allowing for different designs and/or different design locations, and/or different slogans.
3. **ALL DESIGNS MUST BE PRE-APPROVED** - All new license plate designs must be pre-approved by the Transportation Committee, and/or the License Plate Task Force. Designs should adhere to the AAMVA guidelines in existence at that time.
4. **ALL DESIGN WORK AND REWORK MUST BE PROVIDED BY THE SPONSOR GROUP** - The state of Maine should not be involved on the design of specialty plates for private groups and organizations, other than to clarify standards and requirements.
5. **SPECIALTY PLATE PRICES SHOULD COVER ALL COSTS OF DESIGN, PRODUCTION, STORAGE AND DISTRIBUTION** - The State of Maine should incur no expenses as the result of specialty plate production.
6. **NEW SPECIALTY PLATES SHOULD NOT BE OFFERED FOR ANY PRICE LESS THAN THE CURRENTLY EXISTING SPECIALTY PLATES.** The Task Force believes that the integrity and profitability of the existing programs must be protected.
7. **NEW SPECIALTY PLATE NUMBERING SEQUENCE WILL BE DETERMINED AT A LATER DATE** - The numbering system to be used for new specialty plates will be determined at a date closer to the end of the moratorium in July 1999. AAMVA recommendations should be considered in the decision making process at that time. Determining the best numbering system will either become one of the functions of the ongoing License Plate Task Force, or will be determined by the Transportation Committee at that time. The full Transportation Committee must approve the numbering system before any specialty plate production begins.

PLATE IDENTIFICATION CHARACTERS
(A.K.A.: NUMBERING SEQUENCES)
ON DIFFERENT PLATE TYPES:
UNIQUE OR DUPLICATION OPTIONS

1. **NUMBERING SEQUENCE # 1 - DISTINCT ALPHA-NUMERIC COMBINATIONS WITH NO DUPLICATION** - All new general issue and specialty license plates would have distinct alpha-numeric combinations, in split groupings if at all possible. For example, the plate number 123 ABC would only be issued once, on only one plate type. Law enforcement and BMV would be able to determine the plate type based solely on the plate number.
 - a. **ADVANTAGES** -
 - i. **Law Enforcement** - This numbering method would give law enforcement the most readily identifiable Maine license plates.
 - ii. **Follows AAMVA Standards** - The American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators standards specify "Duplication of alpha-numeric combinations is discouraged to allow accurate retrieval of vehicle registration information."
 - iii. **Existing Duplicate Numbers on All Plate Types Including Specialty Plates Would Be Grandfathered.** Current plate distribution would not be disturbed; those individuals who may have already purchased plates because of the identifying alpha-numeric characters would be able to keep them. For example, there may be three different plate types all showing the number series 123 ABC; these will all be allowed to stay in service.
 - iv. **Reserved Plate System** - For a one-time \$15.00 fee, anyone can reserve:
 - (1) **Their Current Plate Number**
 - (2) **Any Existing Character Combination That Has Not Already Been Reserved in the Current or Any Other Plate Type** - available on a first come basis.
 - (3) **Any Desired Character Combination up to Seven Characters That Is Not Already Being Used in the Current or Any Other Plate Type** - available on a first come basis.
 - b. **DISADVANTAGE - Public Wants Specific Alpha-numeric Combinations in All Plate Series** - Constituents may not be willing to purchase specialty plates in the future if they are unable to obtain low digit, vanity and/or alpha-numeric combinations on plates that have been previously issued in any other class (or classes) of plates. For example, someone may not be willing to purchase a loon plate if the character combination he or she desires has already been used for a chickadee passenger plate.
 - c. **COMPROMISE** - Could Make this Proposed Numbering System More Palatable to Public If the Low Digit Series of 1 - 100 (Always the Most Desired Numbers) Would Be Available for Issue for Each New Plate Type. After the

number 100, the alpha-numeric series would revert back to the distinct alpha-numeric series.

2. **NUMBERING SEQUENCE # 2 - STACKED LETTERING SYSTEM ALLOWING THE DUPLICATION OF ALPHA-NUMERIC SERIES IN EACH SPECIALTY PLATE TYPE** - Smaller two letter plate type codes can be stacked in front of or after the alpha-numeric identifier to differentiate among license plates. The stacked letter system is currently in use on several Maine plates, including the code "CR" on the Conservation (loon) plates.

a. **ADVANTAGE -**

- i. **Public Wants Specific Alpha-numeric Combinations in All Plate Series -** Constituents may be willing to purchase more specialty plates in the future if they can obtain low digit, vanity and/or alpha-numeric combinations on plates that have been previously issued in any other class (or classes) of plates. For example, someone may only be willing to purchase a loon plate if the character combination he or she desires is available to them, regardless of whether or not the same combination has already been used for a set of chickadee passenger plates.

b. **DISADVANTAGE -**

- i. **Law Enforcement -** This numbering method would give law enforcement the less identifiable Maine license plates. The stacked letters are much smaller than the other identification characters. Individuals (including out of state law enforcement officials) trying to identify the plate may be unfamiliar with the specialty plate graphic and unable to read the stacked letters. Law enforcement and the Bureau of Motor Vehicles may have to choose between several plate types to determine the correct registrant. In an emergency, any extra time required to identify a vehicle may be crucial. The chances of citizens either not recognizing or improperly identifying specialty plates by graphics alone will continue to increase as the number of specialty plates increases.

PLATE IDENTIFICATION SEQUENCES

CURRENT LEGISLATION - Title 29-A MRSA §451, sub-§4, paragraph B reads:

Number identification for new plate issue. The Task Force shall consider methods of assigning unique identifiers to license plates. The Task Force shall consider use of a stacked letter system to allow duplication of numbers among different types of plates. The Task Force shall make recommendations as to the use of a single numbering system or a system that allows duplication.

CURRENT IDENTIFICATION (NUMBERING) SEQUENCE - Presently, general issue plates are numbered using a 4 numeric/2 alpha sequence. The current sequence started in 1974 with plate numbers "1" through "999999", followed by plate "1A" through "9999A", then all double letters "AA," "BB," "CC," and then "AB," "AC," "AD," etc. The 1987 reissue production skipped a small gap to allow for plates needed before the actual reissue started, and then continued with the same numbering system. The lobster general issue plates being manufactured now will soon end with "9999 DJ," and start a new alpha series with "1 DK."

NEW GENERAL ISSUE PLATE NUMBERING SEQUENCE SHOULD BE DETERMINED AT A LATER DATE - The numbering sequence to be used for new general issue plates should be determined at a date closer to the anticipated start of production in January of 1998. AAMVA recommendations should be considered in the decision making process at that time. The Task Force recommends that determining the best numbering system will either become one of the functions of the ongoing License Plate Task Force, or will be determined by the Transportation Committee at that time. The full Transportation Committee must approve the numbering system before new issue production begins.

OPTIONS FOR NEW GENERAL ISSUE NUMBERING SEQUENCE - Several plate numbering systems have been discussed at length by the Task Force, and are summarized below:

1. **START THE CURRENT NUMBERING SEQUENCE OVER AGAIN** (See above for sequence details.)

a. **DISADVANTAGES -**

i. **POSSIBILITY OF DUPLICATES INCREASED** - During the last plate issue, the Bureau of Motor Vehicles advertised extensively telling the public that they needed to reserve their plate number no less than three months prior to the new plate issue. However, thousands of people either did not understand the reserve process or procrastinated. They then created such a demand by calling BMV and their legislators that this policy was reversed. Current policy allows constituents to reserve their plates at the time of re-registration. A temporary plate will be issued while the request for production is sent to the prison.

If any previously issued plate numbers were not reserved in the

allotted time, (which is technically six months after the previous registration expires) but were still in active use (a real possibility), Maine could experience numerous situations when two plates with the same numbers would be valid at the same time.

- ii. **LEGIBILITY MAY BE COMPROMISED** - This format places identifying characters in the center of the plate, compromising the plate's legibility because:
 - (1) **TRAILER HITCHES** - This position that may be blocked by a ball-type trailer hitch.
 - (2) **CHARACTERS STAMPED OVER DESIGN** - Characters would be stamped over and centered plate design.
 - iii. **FEWER SPECIAL REQUESTS CAN BE ACCOMMODATED** - By reusing old sequences, BMV is unnecessarily limiting the number of two-alpha plates available to be reserved. More people may be disappointed, and less revenue would be made. (The one time fee to reserve a pair of plates is \$15.00).
2. **CONTINUE ON WITH THE CURRENT SEQUENCE** - After leaving a gap in the sequence to accommodate ongoing lobster plate production, new general issue plates would continue the same sequence.
- a. **DISADVANTAGE** -
 - i. **LEGIBILITY MAY BE COMPROMISED BY TRAILER HITCHES** - This format places identifying characters in the center of the plate, compromising the plate's legibility because this position may be blocked by a ball-type trailer hitch.
 - ii. **CURRENT 4 NUMERIC /2 ALPHA COMBINATION IS MORE DIFFICULT TO READ AND RECALL THAN 3 NUMERIC/3 ALPHA SEQUENCES** - Per AAMVA and numerous law enforcement agencies.
3. **3 ALPHA/3 NUMERIC FORMAT** - New general issue production would begin an entirely new numbering sequence beginning with "001 AAA." This is the AAMVA recommended numbering sequence method.
- a. **ADVANTAGES** -
 - i. **AAMVA AND LAW ENFORCEMENT BOTH ENDORSE** - Both AAMVA and law enforcement endorse the 3 alpha/3 numeric (or 3 numeric/3 alpha) sequences because they are most easily read and remembered.
 - ii. **RESERVED NUMBER PLATES WOULD NOT HAVE TO BE PULLED FROM ONGOING NEW ISSUE PRODUCTION** - There are approximately 23,000 active lobster plates with numbers from 1-999999 (about 4% of the 566,790 total active lobster plates). From past experience, BMV staff believe that many of these will be reserved for the new general issue. The new general issue production will be much simpler if all of these do not have to be pulled from the production line and set aside.
 - iii. **LEGIBILITY WILL BE OPTIMAL -- EVEN IF THE CENTER OF THE PLATE IS BLOCKED BY A TRAILER HITCH** - This format will not place identifying characters in the center of the plate, so all characters will be clearly visible even if the center of the plate contains a trailer hitch.

LICENSE PLATE DESIGN - CURRENT MAINE STATUTES

Title 29-A MRSA §451, sub-§4 reads:

4. Registration plate design. Registration plates must be designed as follows

A. Registration plates must bear the year of issue or the last two numerals of that year and the word “Maine” or the abbreviation “Me.” in letters of at least 3/4 inch in height centered at the top of the registration plate.

B. Except on motorcycle plates, registration plate numbers may not be substantially less than 3 inches high.

C. On registration plates issued for private use and trucks, the word “Vacationland” must be centered at the bottom in letters not less than 3/4" inch in height.

D. A new registration plate must have:

- (1) A white background;
- (2) Identification numbers and letters distinctly navy blue; and
- (3) An illustration of a lobster distinctly lobster red.

Public Law Chapter 645, Section C-15, subsection 4. A “Purpose of Task Force,” states that following about the new general issue design:

C. Design for new general issue. The task force shall consider designs for a new general issue plate to replace the lobster plate design. The task force shall use the plate design standards of the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators in developing or evaluating designs. The task force shall present design alternatives to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over transportation matters prior to making a recommendation on plate design.

LICENSE PLATE DESIGN - PROPOSED LEGISLATION

LD NO. 260

An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Task Force on Production and Issuance of Registration Plates

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 29-A MRSA §451, sub-§4-A is enacted to read:

4-A. New General Issue Design. Notwithstanding subsection 4, the design of registration plates issued pursuant to subsection 1-A is governed by this subsection.

A. Registration plates must bear the year of issue or the last two numerals of that year and the word "Maine" or the abbreviation "ME" in letters of at least 3/4 inch in height centered at the top of the registration plate.

B. Except on motorcycle plates, registration plate numbers may not be substantially less than 3 inches high.

C. On registration plates issued for private use and trucks, the word "Vacationland" must be centered at the bottom in letters not less than 3/4 inch in height, except, when the Secretary of State determines that for other than passenger vehicles, that space may be used for class codes.

D. A new registration plate must have:

(1) A green shaded background;

(2) Identification numbers, letters and the border distinctly black; and

(3) An illustration of a chickadee, pine cone and tassel.

E. The Secretary of State shall devise a numbering system suitable for a new general issue of registrations plates.

SUMMARY

This bill creates a new design for the new general issue of registration plates.

GENERAL ISSUE PLATE DESIGN

FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force researched the history of Maine's general issue plates designs, colors, logos and border styles, and studied plates being used in other states.

1. **THE LOBSTER SHOULD BE REPLACED BY THE CHICKADEE, PINECONE AND TASSEL DESIGN** - The generally negative public sentiment concerning the lobster plate was discussed. The Task Force agreed that the new general issue plates should display a distinct non-lobster motif appealing to most Maine constituents, and not partial to (or targeted against) any specific group. The Task Force agreed that the chickadee (state bird since 1927) and pine cone and tassel (state flower since 1895) was the most appropriate design.
2. **CENTER OF PLATE SHOULD NOT CONTAIN IDENTIFYING INFORMATION** - Law enforcement members of the Task Force noted that many plates are partially unreadable on vehicles with ball-type trailer hitches. The Task Force agreed that only non-identifying information (such as a design, a space or a dash) should be placed in the center of the general issue plate, to compensate for the area of many plates blocked by ball-type trailer hitches.
3. **NO GRAPHICS BEHIND IDENTIFYING CHARACTERS** - AAMVA standards state: "Graphics provided behind the alphanumerics should be avoided. When desired in a design these graphics should never exceed 30% of full color strength to maintain good contrast with the alphanumerics." The Task Force agreed that graphics should not appear behind any identifying characters if the readability of the alphanumerics is at all compromised by those graphics.
4. **KEEP THE "VACATIONLAND" LOGO** - The Maine general issue plates have had the "Vacationland" logo since 1935, longer than any other state has maintained a single logo. The Task Force agreed that, because of its history, the "Vacationland" logo should remain in its traditional location at the bottom center of the new general issue plates, except for special class code identifiers on some non-passenger plates.
5. **KEEP THE EMBOSSED RIM** - The general issue plates have had an embossed outer rim for many years. Production time is slightly greater and available plate face area is somewhat decreased when the raised rim is added than plates produced without rims. The Task Force agreed that the embossed rim added a distinctive look and should remain on the new general issue plates despite any slight increase in production time, and any reduction in printing area on the plate.
6. **KEEP THE WHITE BACKGROUND/ USE BLACK CHARACTERS** - AAMVA recommends using plate backgrounds and characters with distinct contrast between each other for maximum readability. The optimum recommended contrast possible would be black characters on a white background. For both maximum readability and a distinctive appearance, the Task Force recommends the use of black characters on a white background

in the plate identification area, but not necessarily the top, bottom or extreme side sections of the plate.

7. **ADD COLOR FADE - GREEN FADING TO WHITE** - The Task Force has observed that distinctive color patterns on other states' standard issue plates render these plates much more recognizable from greater distances than plainly colored plates. For example, New Jersey's yellow color at the top of the plate fading to white at the center is very easy to identify as a New Jersey plate. For both easier recognition as a Maine plate plus a distinguished appearance, the Task Force recommends the use of green pine trees at the bottom of the plate, fading to white at the identifying characters. This meets the legal criteria in Title 29-A MRSA §451, sub-§1 which states "Each new general issue must be easily distinguishable by color from the preceding general issue." Further, no other states or provinces currently are issuing plates with a similar color pattern, although the Task Force has not inquired to determine whether any plans are being made for new plate designs by other states or provinces that might be similar to this recommendation.
8. **STATE NAME MUST BE CLEARLY VISIBLE** - AAMVA standards concerning the state name specify that: "State name color should provide a good color contrast with the background color." The recommended black letters on a white background would provide the best possible color contrast for high visibility.

OTHER JURISDICTIONS - FACTS AND STATISTICS

The Task Force considered what other states and provinces are doing now while determining the best options for Maine plate production:

1. **STANDARD ISSUE PLATE DESIGN* -**
 - a. **GRAPHIC OR SOME TYPE OF DESIGN - 37 STATES**
 - b. **COLOR FADE ON AT LEAST 1/3 OF THE PLATE -**
 - i. **DARKER TO LIGHTER FROM THE TOP - 7 STATES**
 - ii. **DARKER TO LIGHTER FROM THE BOTTOM - 1 STATE**
 - iii. **DARKER TO LIGHTER FROM BOTH TOP AND BOTTOM - 2 STATES**
2. **STANDARD ISSUE NUMBERING SYSTEM CURRENTLY BEING PRODUCED FOR AT LEAST SOME PASSENGER VEHICLES* -**
 - a. **SEPARATED ALPHA AND NUMERIC - (Either alpha first or numeric first)**
 - i. **THREE AND THREE - AT LEAST 32 STATES**
 - ii. **THREE AND FOUR or FOUR AND THREE - 2 STATES**
 - iii. **THREE ALPHA, 2 NUMERIC, 1 ALPHA, OR REVERSE - 3 STATES**
 - iv. **2 ALPHA, 4 NUMERIC - 1 STATE**
 - v. **1 ALPHA, 4 NUMERIC - 1 STATE**
 - b. **MIXED ALPHA-NUMERIC COMBINATIONS, SEPARATED INTO TWO GROUPS - 5 STATES**
 - c. **MIXED ALPHA-NUMERIC WITH NO SEPARATION BETWEEN CHARACTERS - 3 STATES - INCLUDING MAINE**
 - d. **ALL NUMERIC - 4 STATES - INCLUDING MAINE**
3. **LICENSE PLATE SHEETING USED FOR GENERAL ISSUE PLATES****
 - a. **3-M - 49 STATES**
 - b. **AZON-UTSCH - 2 STATES**
 - c. **J R WALD - 1 STATE**
 - d. **AVERY DENNISON - 1 STATE**

*NOTE 1: This information was obtained from The Official License Plate Book, Murray, Thomas C., Wiener, Michael C., ed., Interstate Directory Publishing, Jericho, NY, 1996. Not all states are included in these totals, because their numbering system was not specified. Some states are included twice because they are currently issuing more than one type of numbering series (such as Maine).

**NOTE 2: This information was provided by the 3-M Company.

FUTURE OF THE TASK FORCE

FINDINGS

Some major issues have not yet been decided by this Task Force, such as the numbering series to be used for the new general issue. Additionally during the course of our work, the Task Force has realized that the technologies and options for license plate production are improving at a rapid pace.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

THIS TASK FORCE SHOULD REMAIN INTACT:

1. **TO ASSIST WITH THE NEW GENERAL ISSUE** - The Task Force will need to be readily available to provide information, advice and make necessary decisions during the new general issue -- including the crucial decision still to be made involving the type of numbering system to be used.
2. **TO STUDY AND EVALUATE NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND PLAN FOR THE FUTURE OF LICENSE PLATE PRODUCTION** - The Task Force should continue to investigate and evaluate developing technologies that may enable Maine to produce license plates with more efficiency, less expense, increased usefulness and greater customer satisfaction. A long range plan for license plate production should therefore be developed and pursued.

CLOSING

In summary, the License Plate Task Force believes that its recommendations are in keeping with its mission as assigned. The Task Force was charged with evaluating the license plate manufacturing process to determine the best method of producing plates for the general reissue. The committee also was charged with recommending a design for the new general plate issue.

An evaluation of the current manufacturing system, including costs of upgrading equipment and facilities to handle a new general plate issue were compared to alternative systems formally proposed by four vendors. The Task Force has determined that the current manufacturing process still is the best system for the production of the high volume of plates needed for the general issue. The alternative processes are too new, not completely tested, and appear to be more expensive although exact costs are not available at this time. The newer, computerized license plate manufacturing processes provide more flexibility in the production process, and are better suited for low volume, specialty plate production.

The Task Force feels that the use of the prison facility to produce license plates is best accomplished with the current manufacturing process. Components of alternative systems not only require better environmental controls not found in the present facility, but also may require more training and expertise on the part of the operators. The amount of staff training presently is kept to a minimum due to the short terms of the inmates assigned to the Plate Shop.

The Task Force has determined that the current process is not agile enough to accommodate an increased demand for specialty plate requests. Because the alternative systems are too new to be properly evaluated, the committee recommends that the Task Force continue in existence in order to evaluate the new processes between now and the end of the moratorium on specialty plate requests which currently is set for July 1, 1999.

The Task Force recognized that the use of duplicate numbers is a problem for law enforcement, but the past practice has been to allow specialty groups the choice of low digit numbers. A clear system for use of class codes, stacked numbers and/or other indicia will be needed. By following standards issued by the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators and continued cooperation and communication with law enforcement, the Task Force feels such a system can be built.

By far, the hardest assignment was the choice of a design for the new plate issue. Some members started with a clear impression that Maine should have a plain plate. But the Task Force was convinced, as the media continues to remind us, that there is a lot of interest in having some type of graphic on our standard issue plate.

The Task Force's goal was to choose a design which is emblematic of the whole State of Maine.

The committee looked at the state bird, state flower, pine tree, outline of the State, and the State Seal. We chose a combination of the chickadee and pine cone and tassel. The Task Force concluded that the design must be positioned in such a way that there is minimal interference with any number sequence used. The Task Force knows that there may be considerable pressure to choose an alternative design. We only can caution that this is still after all a license plate, and should be kept as simple and legible as possible, since it is the most important means of vehicle identification available to law enforcement.

This new general plate issue will be a great benefit to law enforcement. It will improve the accuracy of the Bureau of Motor Vehicles database, and enhance State and Municipal revenue collection as registration evasion will become more difficult. Finally, the Task Force feels that this license plate design will portray a positive image of the State of Maine.

APPENDIX A

LICENSE PLATE COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Representative Harry Bailey

Representative Joseph Driscoll

Representative Charles Heino

Senator Albert Stevens, Jr. - License Plate Committee Chairperson

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Sheriff Bryan Lamoreau - Kennebec County Sheriff's Dept.

Chief John Rogers - Farmington Police Department

Lieutenant Anne Schaad - Maine State Police

BUREAU OF MOTOR VEHICLES

Elizabeth Austin - Business Manager

Cathie DiBenedetti - Director - Public Services Division

William Dowling - Assistant Deputy Secretary of State

Garry Hinkley - Director - Commercial Vehicles Division

RESOURCE PEOPLE - BMV

Peter Brazier - Director, Administrative Services

Cathy Cable - Administrative Services

Harold Hodgkins - Supervisor - Maine State Prison Plate Shop

Paul Potvin - Chief Accountant

APPENDIX B

LICENSE PLATE TASK FORCE MEMBERS:

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Representative Joseph Driscoll

Representative Wesley Farnum

Representative William O'Gara - License Plate Task Force Chairperson

Senator Albert Stevens, Jr.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Sheriff Bryan Lamoreau - Kennebec County Sheriff's Dept.

Chief John Rogers - Farmington Police Department

Lieutenant Anne Schaad - Maine State Police

BUREAU OF MOTOR VEHICLES

Elizabeth Austin - Business Manager

Cathie DiBenedetti - Director - Public Services Division

William Dowling - Assistant Deputy Secretary of State

Garry Hinkley - Director - Commercial Vehicles Division

RESOURCE PEOPLE - BMV

Peter Brazier - Director, Administrative Services

Cathy Cable - Administrative Services

Harold Hodgkins - Supervisor - Maine State Prison Plate Shop

Paul Potvin - Chief Accountant

sections of this Part that enact Title 29-A, sections 255 and 256 take effect on October 1, 1996.

PART C

Sec. C-1. 29-A MRSA §451, sub-§1-A is enacted to read:

1-A. New general issue. The Secretary of State shall provide for a new general issue of registration plates and shall begin issuing the new plates no later than July 1, 1999. The Secretary of State shall provide for the issuance of new plates before December 31, 2000 to all vehicles required to obtain new plates.

Sec. C-2. 29-A MRSA §451, sub-§4, ¶D, as amended by PL 1995, c. 65, Pt. A, §86 and affected by §153 and Pt. C, §15, is further amended to read:

D. A new registration plate must have:

- (1) A white background;
- (2) Identification numbers and letters distinctly navy blue; and
- (3) An illustration of a lobster distinctly lobster red.

This paragraph is repealed on July 1, 1999.

Sec. C-3. 29-A MRSA §451, sub-§6, as enacted by PL 1993, c. 683, Pt. A, §2 and affected by Pt. B, §5, is amended to read:

6. Plates to be manufactured at State Prison. The Secretary of State or the duly designated official in charge of vehicle registration shall purchase and cause to be installed at the State Prison the necessary equipment and materials for the production of all vehicle registration plates used in the State. Only plates that can not be produced at the prison and plates for which anticipated demand is below a minimum number determined by the Secretary of State may be purchased for state use.

The Warden of the State Prison ~~shall--have~~ has charge of operations at the State Prison relative to the manufacture of all plates made for the State. The Warden of the State Prison, with the consent of the Secretary of State, may employ for limited periods of time a supervisor for the purpose of instructing inmates in the operation of making such plates.

Sec. C-4. 29-A MRSA §457, sub-§7, as enacted by PL 1993, c. 683, Pt. A, §2 and affected by Pt. B, §5, is amended to read:

7. **Registration fee.** The fee for registration of an antique auto, horseless carriage or antique motorcycle is ~~\$12~~ \$13. The fee for registration of a street rod is ~~\$27~~ \$28.

Sec. C-5. 29-A MRSA §458, sub-§2, as enacted by PL 1993, c. 683, Pt. A, §2 and affected by Pt. B, §5, is amended to read:

2. **Fee.** The fee for a registration plate under this section is ~~\$5~~ \$6.

Sec. C-6. 29-A MRSA §461, as amended by PL 1995, c. 482, Pt. B, §5, is further amended to read:

§461. Reservation of same number

1. **Plate issue year.** In a year in which new registration plates are issued, the Secretary of State shall reserve until July 1st the same registration number for the succeeding registration year for a person who notifies in writing the Secretary of State prior to May 1st of that person's desire to retain that registration number. The fee for retention of the same registration number is ~~\$5~~ \$15.

If a person does not have a vehicle to register on May 1st, a registration number may be held for a maximum of 2 registration years by depositing with the Secretary of State ~~\$10~~ \$15 for each year; except that the registered owner of an antique vehicle may reserve the antique registration assigned to that person for 4 years by depositing the sum of ~~\$12~~ \$15 for each registration year. These fees are not refundable and may not be applied against the registration fee.

All numbers other than those reserved must be released and issued in rotation after July 1st.

A person wishing to select a number out of rotation may do so by paying the registration fee and a reserved number fee of \$5.

A holder of vanity registration plates must pay the sum of \$15 to reserve those letters or combination of letters and numbers, which is credited toward the renewal fee.

2. **Nonplate issue year.** In other than a plate issue year, when a person fails to reregister and the registration remains expired for 6 consecutive months, the reservation of the same number ceases and the number becomes available for reissuance.

For a maximum of 2 registration years, a person may reserve the registration number assigned to that person by depositing with the Secretary of State the sum of ~~\$10~~ \$15 for each year; except that the registered owner of an antique motor vehicle may reserve the antique registration assigned to that person for 4 years by depositing with the Secretary of State the sum of ~~\$12~~ \$15 for each year. A person wishing to select a number out of rotation may do so by paying the registration fee and a reserved number fee of \$5.

~~Sec. C-7.~~ 29-A MRSA §§466 and 467 are enacted to read:

§466. Registration Plate Equipment and Production Program

The Registration Plate Equipment and Production Program is established as a program within the Highway Fund. One dollar from each registration fee paid in accordance with section 457, 458, 501, 504, 505, 509, 513, 515 or 520 must be paid into the Highway Fund and allocated to the Registration Plate Equipment and Production Program. The Legislature may authorize allocations from the program exclusively for costs relating to the design, production, storage, handling and issuance of registration plates. These costs may include, but are not limited to, the following: the purchase, installation, repair and rebuilding of equipment used in the production or handling of registration plates; materials used in the production, handling and shipping of registration plates; and buildings or space rented, leased or purchased for the production or storage of registration plates or the storage of materials used in the production of plates. Highway Fund allocations to the Registration Plate Equipment and Production Program may not lapse but must be carried forward to be used for the same purposes.

§467. Moratorium on specialty plates

During the period beginning on July 1, 1996 and ending July 1, 1999, the Secretary of State may not issue any specialty plate of a new design. For the purposes of this section, "specialty plate of a new design" means any plate of a design not authorized under this Title before July 1, 1996. It does not include vanity plates issued in accordance with section 453 or commemorative plates issued in accordance with section 454.

Sec. C-8. 29-A MRSA §501, sub-§1, as affected by PL 1995, c. 65, Pt. A, §153, amended by Pt. C, §3 and affected by §15, is further amended to read:

1. **Automobiles; pickup trucks.** The fee for an automobile or pickup truck used for the conveyance of passengers or interchangeably for passengers or property is ~~\$22~~ \$23.

An automobile used for the conveyance of passengers or property is a "combination" vehicle and may be issued a special plate with the word "combination" instead of "Vacationland." A passenger vehicle used under contract with the State, a municipality or a school district to transport students must be designated as "combination." A vehicle owned or operated by parents or legal guardians is exempt from this subsection.

Commercial plates may not be issued for or displayed on an automobile.

The gross weight of a pickup truck registered as provided by this subsection may not exceed 6,000 pounds. An owner of a pickup truck who operates the pickup truck with a gross weight in excess of 6,000 pounds or the pickup truck drawing a semitrailer with a combined gross weight in excess of 6,000 pounds must register the truck as provided in section 504.

Sec. C-9. 29-A MRSA §504, sub-§1, as enacted by PL 1993, c. 683, Pt. A, §2 and affected by Pt. B, §5, is amended to read:

1. **Truck or truck tractor.** For a truck or truck tractor equipped with pneumatic tires, the following annual registration fee schedule applies.

A. For gross weight from 0 to 6,000 pounds, the fee is ~~\$22~~ \$23.

B. For gross weight from 6,001 to 9,000 pounds, the fee is ~~\$28~~ \$29.

C. For gross weight from 9,001 to 12,000 pounds, the fee is ~~\$45~~ \$46.

D. For gross weight from 12,001 to 14,000 pounds, the fee is ~~\$78~~ \$79.

E. For gross weight from 14,001 to 16,000 pounds, the fee is ~~\$102~~ \$103.

F. For gross weight from 16,001 to 18,000 pounds, the fee is ~~\$127~~ \$128.

G. For gross weight from 18,001 to 20,000 pounds, the fee is ~~\$158~~ \$159.

H. For gross weight from 20,001 to 23,000 pounds, the fee is ~~\$185~~ \$186.

- I. For gross weight from 23,001 to 26,000 pounds, the fee is \$217 \$218.
- J. For gross weight from 26,001 to 28,000 pounds, the fee is \$264 \$265.
- K. For gross weight from 28,001 to 32,000 pounds, the fee is \$305 \$306.
- L. For gross weight from 32,001 to 34,000 pounds, the fee is ~~\$339~~ \$340.
- M. For gross weight from 34,001 to 38,000 pounds, the fee is \$376 \$377.
- N. For gross weight from 38,001 to 40,000 pounds, the fee is \$400 \$401.
- O. For gross weight from 40,001 to 42,000 pounds, the fee is \$423 \$424.
- P. For gross weight from 42,001 to 45,000 pounds, the fee is \$447 \$448.
- Q. For gross weight from 45,001 to 48,000 pounds, the fee is \$494 \$495.
- R. For gross weight from 48,001 to 51,000 pounds, the fee is \$530 \$531.
- S. For gross weight from 51,001 to 54,000 pounds, the fee is \$565 \$566.
- T. For gross weight from 54,001 to 55,000 pounds, the fee is \$577 \$578.
- U. For gross weight from 55,001 to 60,000 pounds, the fee is \$637 \$638.
- V. For gross weight from 60,001 to 65,000 pounds, the fee is \$696 \$697.
- W. For gross weight from 65,001 to 69,000 pounds, the fee is \$759 \$760.
- X. For gross weight from 69,001 to 72,000 pounds, the fee is \$794 \$795.
- Y. For gross weight from 72,001 to 75,000 pounds, the fee is \$818 \$819.

Z. For gross weight from 75,001 to 78,000 pounds, the fee is \$854 \$855.

AA. For gross weight from 78,001 to 80,000 pounds, the fee is \$874 \$875.

BB. For gross weight from 80,001 to 90,000 pounds, the fee is \$979 \$980.

Sec. C-10. 29-A MRSA §505, sub-§2, as enacted by PL 1993, c. 683, Pt. A, §2 and affected by Pt. B, §5, is amended to read:

2. Annual registration fee. For a farm truck, the following annual registration fee schedule applies.

A. For gross weight from 0 to 6,000 pounds, the fee is \$18 \$19.

B. For gross weight from 6,001 to 9,000 pounds, the fee is \$21 \$22.

C. For gross weight from 9,001 to 11,000 pounds, the fee is \$24 \$25.

D. For gross weight from 11,001 to 14,000 pounds, the fee is \$36 \$37.

E. For gross weight from 14,001 to 16,000 pounds, the fee is \$47 \$48.

F. For gross weight from 16,001 to 18,000 pounds, the fee is \$69 \$70.

G. For gross weight from 18,001 to 20,000 pounds, the fee is \$81 \$82.

H. For gross weight from 20,001 to 23,000 pounds, the fee is \$98 \$99.

I. For gross weight from 23,001 to 26,000 pounds, the fee is \$116 \$117.

J. For gross weight from 26,001 to 29,000 pounds, the fee is \$143 \$144.

K. For gross weight from 29,001 to 32,000 pounds, the fee is \$163 \$164.

L. For gross weight from 32,001 to 35,000 pounds, the fee is ~~\$239~~ \$240.

M. For gross weight from 35,001 to 38,000 pounds, the fee is ~~\$262~~ \$263.

N. For gross weight from 38,001 to 42,000 pounds, the fee is ~~\$285~~ \$286.

O. For gross weight from 42,001 to 46,000 pounds, the fee is ~~\$308~~ \$309.

P. For gross weight from 46,001 to 50,000 pounds, the fee is ~~\$331~~ \$332.

Q. For gross weight from 50,001 to 54,000 pounds, the fee is ~~\$354~~ \$355.

Sec. C-11. 29-A MRSA §509, as enacted by PL 1993, c. 683, Pt. A, §2 and affected by Pt. B, §5, is amended to read:

§509. Tractors

1. **Tractors.** The annual fee for the registration of a tractor must accompany an application for registration and is as follows.

Tractors equipped with:

A. Pneumatic tires, 25¢ per horsepower and 25¢ per 100 pounds of weight;

B. Solid rubber tires, 25¢ per horsepower and 50¢ per 100 pounds of weight; and

C. Iron, steel or other hard tires, 25¢ per horsepower and 80¢ per 100 pounds of weight.

The minimum fee is \$2 \$3.

2. **Tractors used for farming.** The fee for a tractor used for agricultural purposes or not customarily used on public ways is \$2 \$3, except as provided in section 510, subsection 1.

3. **Old homemade tractors used for farming.** The fee for a homemade tractor used for agricultural purposes with motor and chassis at least 10 years old that has a body capacity of not more than 1 1/2 cubic yards and that is used exclusively for agricultural purposes is \$2 \$3. Such a vehicle may not be

operated on the highway more than 10 miles from the place where the vehicle is customarily kept.

Sec. C-12. 29-A MRSA §513, sub-§2, ¶¶A and B, as enacted by PL 1993, c. 683, Pt. A, §2 and affected by Pt. B, §5, are amended to read:

A. Class A special mobile equipment must be operated under an annual registration. The fee for a Class A special mobile equipment registration permit is as follows.

- (1) For gross weight from 0 to 54,000 pounds, the fee is as in section 505, subsection 2.
- (2) For gross weight from 54,001 to 60,000 pounds, the fee is ~~\$384-~~ \$385.
- (3) For gross weight from 60,001 to 65,000 pounds, the fee is ~~\$414-~~ \$415.
- (4) For gross weight from 65,001 to 70,000 pounds, the fee is ~~\$444-~~ \$445.
- (5) For gross weight from 70,001 to 75,000 pounds, the fee is ~~\$474-~~ \$475.
- (6) For gross weight from 75,001 to 80,000 pounds, the fee is ~~\$504-~~ \$505.
- (7) For gross weight from 80,001 to 90,000 pounds, the fee is ~~\$564-~~ \$565.

B. The fee for Class B special mobile equipment is ~~\$17~~ \$18.

Sec. C-13. 29-A MRSA §515, sub-§§1 and 2, as enacted by PL 1993, c. 683, Pt. A, §2 and affected by Pt. B, §5, are amended to read:

- 1. **Motorcycle.** A motorcycle or a parking control vehicle is ~~\$18~~ \$19; and
- 2. **Moped.** A moped is ~~\$6~~ \$7.

Sec. C-14. 29-A MRSA §520, sub-§1, as enacted by PL 1993, c. 683, Pt. A, §2 and affected by Pt. B, §5, is amended to read:

- 1. **Registration fee.** The annual registration fee for special equipment, based on gross weight, is ~~\$7~~ \$8 for equipment weighing one to 2,000 pounds; ~~\$12~~ \$13 for 2,001 to 5,000 pounds; and ~~\$17~~ \$18 for over 5,000 pounds.

Sec. C-15. Task force on production and issuance of license plates. The Secretary of State shall convene a task force to study the production and issuance of license plates. The task force shall convene no later than May 15, 1996 and conclude its work no later than November 1, 1996.

1. Membership. The task force consists of 11 members selected as follows.

The President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House shall each appoint 2 members to serve as task force members. Members may continue to serve after their legislative term of office has expired. At the request of one of their appointees, the appointing authority may appoint another member of the committee to replace the requesting member on the task force.

The Secretary of State shall appoint 2 members representing law enforcement: one representing county sheriffs' departments and one representing municipal police departments.

The Chief of the State Police shall designate a state police officer to serve as a member.

The business manager for the bureau; the director of the public services division within the Bureau of Motor Vehicles; the director of the commercial vehicles division within the bureau; and an assistant deputy secretary of state serve as ex officio members of the task force.

The Chairs of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation and the Secretary of State shall send a list of the people appointed to serve on the task force to the Executive Director of the Legislative Council no later than May 1, 1996.

2. Convening of first meeting; election of chair. The Secretary of State or a designee of the Secretary of State shall convene the first meeting of the task force no later than May 15, 1996. The task force shall select a chair from among its members.

3. Staff and resource consultants to the task force. The Secretary of State shall provide staff assistance to the task force. The supervisor of the Maine State Prison plate shop shall serve as a consultant to the task force. The task force may request assistance with the preparation of any recommended legislation from the Legislative Council.

4. Purpose of task force. The task force shall study issues relating to the design and production of license plates and make recommendations to the Legislature for the new general

plate issue beginning July 1, 1999. In conducting the study the task force shall examine the following.

A. The task force shall evaluate the existing equipment at the Warren prison facility, its adequacy for meeting plate production demand and the costs of overhauling that equipment prior to a new general issue. The task force shall examine state-of-the-art technology for in-house graphics creation and production of specialty plates. The task force shall consider costs of new equipment and the impact of various types of equipment on production capabilities and on jobs at the prison facility.

B. The task force shall consider methods of assigning unique identifiers to license plates. The task force shall consider use of a stacked letter system to allow duplication of numbers among different types of plates. The task force shall make recommendations as to the use of a single numbering system or a system that allows duplication.

C. The task force shall consider designs for a new general issue plate to replace the lobster plate design. The task force shall use the plate design standards of the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators in developing or evaluating designs. The task force shall present design alternatives to the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation before making a recommendation on plate design.

5. Reimbursement for travel expenses. Members of the task force who are Legislators or were Legislators at the time of appointment are entitled to reimbursement for travel expenses for meetings of the task force. Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation who participated in meetings initiated by the Secretary of State to study license plate production issues during the period of September 1, 1995 to December 31, 1995 are entitled to reimbursement for travel expenses upon submitting the appropriate expense forms to the Executive Director of the Legislative Council.

6. Report. The task force shall submit a report including findings, recommendations and proposed legislation to the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation and to the Executive Director of the Legislative Council no later than November 1, 1996. The task force shall submit legislation to implement its recommendations to the Revisor of Statutes no later than January 1, 1997. The report must include a proposed plate design for the new general issue, recommendations for the registration classes required to display the new general issue plates and for the

specialty plates to remain in use concurrent with the new general issue.

Sec. C-16. Effective date. Those sections of this Part that enact Maine Revised Statutes, Title 29-A, section 451, subsection 1-A and section 466 and that amend Title 29-A, section 451, subsection 4; and sections 457, 458, 461, 501, 504, 505, 509, 513, 515 and 520 take effect on July 1, 1996.

PART D

Sec. D-1. Allocation. The following funds are allocated from the Highway Fund to carry out the purposes of this Act.

1996-97

SECRETARY OF STATE, DEPARTMENT OF THE

Administration - Motor Vehicles

Positions - Legislative count	(1.0)
Personal Services	\$18,846
All Other	155,077
Capital Expenditures	4,500
TOTAL	178,423

Provides funds for a Clerk Typist III position, software modifications and other general operating expenses to carry out fuel tax processing within the Bureau of Motor Vehicles.

TRANSPORTATION, DEPARTMENT OF

Administration and Planning

All Other	(178,423)
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Deallocates funds no longer required for the reimbursement of the Bureau of Taxation for fuel tax processing.

LEGISLATURE

Task Force on Production and Issuance of License Plates

License Plate Task Force

Comparison of Vendors of License Plate Systems

VENDOR:	Avery-Dennison	3M	Azon-Utsch	John R. Wald Co.
Product Description	Reflective sheeting which is applied to an aluminum substrate. Plate number is then embossed and roller coated with paint. An applicator would need to be leased or purchased in order for us to use their product.	Reflective sheeting which is applied to an aluminum substrate. Plate number is then embossed and roller coated with paint. Applicator is owned by 3M. Historically they have not sold this equipment and restrict the use to only 3M sheeting	A system which prints a design as well as a plate number onto reflective sheeting. Another system applies the sheeting to aluminum substrate, laminates with "Tedlar", blanks, and stacks finished plates. An inventory tracking system using barcode technology.	This company services most plate making equipment. They are marketing an applicator which is due to be installed for the first time in October by the State of Missouri. They are also marketing a printer for specialty plates which is still in the testing mode.
Co-Vendor	Recommends use of John R. Wald's Applicator.	None	Recommends Avery's sheeting, however, they say that other sheeting suppliers products will work.	Recommends Avery's sheeting, however they say that other sheeting suppliers products will work.
Customer Base	North Carolina - 8 years Missouri - in October	44 States	New York - 2 years Colorado - new Missouri - Specialty plates only	Designed, engineered and installed equipment in 43 States
Product Testing	Plates tested at the University of So. Maine in 1996	Plates tested at the University of So. Maine in 1995	We have not seen any test results although the Company claims to have tested their product.	Testing of specialty plate printer is now being done. The Company will send us the results within 60 days.

License Plate Task Force

Comparison of Vendors of License Plate Systems

VENDOR:	Avery-Dennison	3M	Azon-Utsch	John R. Wald Co.
Known Costs	Applicator ~ \$250,000 New Embossing Press, Blanking Press, Roller Coater, Wash Tank and other equipment ~\$260,000 There is a possibility that the cost to use or purchase the applicator can be added to the price of sheeting.	New Embossing Press, Blanking Press, Roller Coater, and other equipment. ~\$260,000. New printer for specialty plates \$?	Cost of the State of New York's complete system was ~\$1.5 million.	Applicator \$250,000 Embossing Press, Blanking Press, Roller Coater, Wash Tank and other equipment. ~\$260,000. Printer for Specialty Plates ~\$250,000
Specialty Plate System	Will design and print any specialty design onto sheeting and sell it by the roll.	Will design and print any specialty design onto sheeting and sell it by the roll. Currently developing a specialty plate printer which would allow us to print any style plate on demand.	System will print any style plate on demand.	Currently testing a printer which will allow us to print any style plate on demand.
Other Considerations	Converting to a new system would require running both systems for some time. This would require room which we do not have at this time. Provision would also need to be made for additional storage of raw materials and work in process..	More room would be needed for storage of raw materials and work in process.	This system takes up less room than we presently need, however there is some concern about environment for the thermal transfer printer. Modifications to the work area would be needed.	Converting to a new system would require running both systems for some time. This would require room which we do not have at this time. Provision would also need to be made for additional storage of raw materials and work in process.

APPENDIX E
CURRENT FLOOR PLAN OF LICENSE PLATE SHOP AT WARREN CORRECTIONAL FACILITY

