



The EZ-ID License Plate Program Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles

Introduction

The EZ-ID License Plate Program offers a unique reform to the Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV) license plate system. The program is designed to make motor vehicle license plates more easily recognizable for law enforcement purposes. It incorporates an easily recognizable symbol such as a circle, square, triangle, heart, diamond or star into the registration number itself. The program would be mandatory for all general issue plates, but would exempt specialty, vanity, and low number license plates as these are already more easily recognizable. Typically, three of the symbols would be standard issue for the general public, and three symbols would be considered optional. The Commonwealth would generate new incremental revenues from the sale of optional symbols and low-number-plus-symbol vanity plates. As the program matures, the RMV would be capable of adding new symbols for both standard and optional plates.

The Problem and Solution

Massachusetts' current outdated Registry system is at the beginning phase of a major upgrade. By incorporating EZ-ID program requirements into the new Registry system, the Commonwealth could provide law enforcement with another very important tool in the fight against any crime in which a motor vehicle was used. The ability for the public, victims and witnesses to crimes, and law enforcement personnel to more quickly identify the vehicles involved would ultimately reduce crimes or at least increase victim recovery times.

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By incorporating a symbol into the registration itself, Massachusetts license plates would require typically 3 but no more than 4 alphanumeric characters in addition to a symbol, rather than the current system of 6 alphanumeric characters. Statistics show that identifying 3 characters on a 6 character plate, plus the color of the vehicle, reduces the suspect pool to about 1 in 4,300 vehicles. With the EZ-ID license plate, identifying the symbol plus 2 alphanumeric characters plus the color of the vehicle reduces the suspect pool to about 1 in 123. Further identifying the vehicle as an SUV versus a sedan versus a minivan reduces the number of suspect vehicles to double digits. Because the program would be mandatory for all general issue plates, it would not be discriminatory against any targeted group.

Each EZ-ID license plate has a specific administrative code on the left side, which identifies the symbol as well as in which position of the numbering sequence the symbol appears. This concept works just like the existing specialty plates such as Red Sox (with an RS) or Cape and Islands (with a CI). The letter identifies the specific symbol; the number below it the position of the symbol in the numbering sequence. Only RMV and law enforcement personnel would use the administrative code.

The advantages of the program are numerous. The plates' format allows for easy identification by victims or witnesses to a crime. Second, it would enhance the capabilities of the Amber Alert Program, considering that at 65 miles per hour on a highway, a vehicle operator has only 7 seconds to read and remember an electronic message sign. It would also empower the 'cell phone army' on the highways to report vehicles with the symbol on the plate.

Since the EZ-ID format is quite similar to the existing specialty/vanity plate system, a seamless transition may be facilitated using the Commonwealth's existing production and distribution systems. The major change would be the requirement to re-tool the machines that make the plates to include approved symbols, a cost currently estimated at \$80,000 for Massachusetts. The plates would continue to be produced in the prison system, and distribution would continue to be performed through Registry offices, dealerships, and insurance agents. It is advisable to stagger the implementation of plate conversions by requiring existing general issue plate holders to convert when current registrations come up for renewal.

The EZ-ID license plate system will generate incremental new revenues through the sale of optional symbols (star, heart, and diamond) and low number plates (symbol plus 0, 1 or 2 alphanumerics). It is estimated that if just 1 in 10 Massachusetts residents chose an optional symbol or low number plate, the Commonwealth could generate as much as \$11 million every renewal period. Ultimately the program would allow the Commonwealth to recapture up front implementation funds, and continue to generate new funds into the future.

Potential Application

The EZ-ID License Plate Program was invented and is owned by Sun-Up Products, Inc. of Danvers, Massachusetts. It is a for-profit company, and Sun-Up needs to cover its costs for intellectual property, the hiring of permanent staff to manage the program over multiple states (and countries), dissemination of information to member states, and professional management services. Typically the Company requests a one-time up front \$0.25 per vehicle conversion program management fee, plus 15% of new incremental revenues generated by the program. Because the program was invented in Massachusetts, Sun-Up Products is willing to waive the \$0.25 fee and only earn 15% of new incremental revenues for Massachusetts. Currently, several other states and a Canadian province are considering EZ-ID. In conclusion, the EZ-ID Program is a step forward in vehicle licensing and would provide a significant boost to law enforcement efforts.



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