

VETO MESSAGE ON HB 2065

May 20, 2003

To the Honorable Speaker and Members,
The House of Representatives of the State of Washington

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am returning herewith, without my approval as to sections 1, 2, 5 and 7, House Bill No. 2065 entitled:

"AN ACT Relating to license plate technology;"

This bill requires the Department of Licensing (DOL) to implement a flat, digitally printed license plate system and designates fees for this purpose.

Section 1 would have required DOL to phase in digital license plates starting July 1, 2004, with full implementation by January 1, 2007. For many decades, the Department of Corrections has produced embossed license plates, which are readable and durable, at a reasonable price. While the transition to digital license plates may afford some advantages, with so many other pressing transportation demands, the substantial six-year cost of \$10.3 million is not warranted at this time.

Section 2 would have provided that for a fee of twenty dollars, vehicle owners may retain their current license plate number upon replacement. Section 5 would have established fees for the DOL design of special license plates. These sections provided that these fees be deposited into the license plate technology account for the financing of a digital license plate system. Only after the financing of such a system had been fully paid, would such fee revenues be eligible for deposit into the multimodal account. I have vetoed these sections because I prefer the unfettered distribution of these revenues to the multimodal account, as provided in Engrossed Substitute House Bill No. 2231, which I signed yesterday.

Section 7 would have provided that this bill is null and void if not referenced in the omnibus transportation appropriations act by June 30, 2003. Since I have vetoed sections 212(4) and 409 of the omnibus transportation appropriations act, Engrossed Substitute House Bill No. 1163, I have vetoed section 7.

Despite these section vetoes, I support the eventual transition to digital license plate technology, and have retained the twenty-five cent registration fee for deposit in the license plate technology account as provided in section 3. While we are saving for this transition, we can take a more deliberative approach to designing a system that best fits the state's needs. I have directed DOL to continue to explore new and innovative ways to utilize technology advancements to improve services and to provide the most cost-effective business practices possible. We will continue to work with the appropriate legislative committees to address the intent of section 1.

For these reasons, I have vetoed sections 1, 2, 5 and 7 of House

Bill No. 2065.

With the exception of sections 1, 2, 5 and 7, House Bill No. 2065 is approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Gary Locke
Governor