

MOTOR VEHICLE BRANCH MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE DECISION REQUEST

Date: December 5, 1995

Issue:

Unused licence plate combinations for passenger vehicles are in short supply and will run out in the first quarter of 1997. The Insurance Corporation of British Columbia (ICBC) has proposed a short-term solution that will provide eight more years of passenger plates using the existing plate design.

Recommended Action:

Approve ICBC's proposed plate numbering series for passenger vehicles. The proposal will change the plate format to ANA NNN, where "A" is a letter and "N" is a number.

Background:

The current licence plate format consists of three letters followed by three numbers (AAA NNN). This combination provides eight million unique sequences after removing the letters I, O, U, Q, Z, Y. These letters are not used for B.C. plates due to their potential to be misidentified or transcribed incorrectly.

British Columbia currently issues passenger licence plates at a rate of 450,000 per year. At this rate, we will run out of new alphanumeric combinations by the first quarter of 1997. Programs that increase plate distribution, such as a possible damaged plate replacement program to satisfy photo radar requirements, make years-of-supply projections risky.

ICBC is replacing their existing insurance system with the New Generation Insurance System (NGIS). The scope of NGIS may be changed to accommodate the inclusion of a Revenue Stock Management program. However, this work cannot be accomplished without running the risk that the passenger plate numbers may be exhausted before NGIS is fully implemented.

Other Jurisdictions:

There are no interjurisdictional standards, guidelines or agreements in place restricting the alphanumeric pattern of licence plates.

Although no Canadian province issues passenger plates with the proposed ANA NNN format, similar formats are used in the United States.

Policy Implications:

There are no policy implications.

Financial Implications:

ICBC estimates the costs of computer system modifications to be \$87,000. The issue of whether these costs are covered by the 5 percent transfer budget is being dealt with in a different forum.

There may be minor incremental cost to the plate contract; they are being confirmed by the manufacturer.

Legislative Implications:

The proposal requires no legislative changes. The Motor Vehicle Act and Regulations require that unique licence plate numbers be assigned, however, there are no restrictions on how this is accomplished. (Division 34 does speak to the eligibility criteria for Personalized Number Plate slogans.)

System Implications:

The Speed Management Project may need to modify photo radar software to fit the new format. There are no other identified systems implications for the Branch.

Implications to Other Branches/Divisions:

The Speed Management Project may need to undertake minor software changes.

Management Services will need to notify the plate manufacturer of changes in the numbering sequence.

Consultations:

RCMP "E" Division and Vancouver City Police have been consulted and have no concerns with the proposed numbering system. The Speed Management Project team and the Management Services Division have also been consulted. The plate manufacturer can accommodate the proposed change; there may be incremental cost to the plate contract.

Alternatives / Options:**1. Status Quo - Not recommended.**

With no action it is possible that existing licence plate numbers will be exhausted in the first quarter of 1997.

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| Advantages: | • No direct financial cost to MVB |
| Disadvantages: | • Incapacitates passenger vehicle licencing. |

2. Reverse Alpha and Numeric Sets - Not recommended.

The current plate format is AAA NNN. Reversing the alpha and numeric sets creates a new plate series with a format of NNN AAA.

- Advantages:
- Provides approximately 7.9 million new passenger plate numbers, or approximately 15 years supply at current rates of use.
 - The format is consistent with other Canadian jurisdictions (Manitoba and Ontario).
 - Format is analogous to the existing format, aiding identification.

- Disadvantages:
- Implementation will require substantial computer programming effort.
 - Direct costs estimated to be about \$600,000.
 - Like the recommended option, this is an interim solution only, meaning the work would be discarded once NGIS is implemented.

3. Delay Decision Until NGIS is Completed - Not recommended.

ICBC should be better able to accommodate changes to licence plate formats using NGIS.

- Advantages:
- No direct costs.

- Disadvantages:
- High risk of failure to implement new licence plates before the current series runs out.

4. Approve ICBC's proposal to change the plate numbering format to ANA NNN, where "A" is a letter and "N" is a number - **Recommended**.

- Advantages:
- Direct costs of implementation are relatively low (approximately \$87,000).
 - Provides more than eight years of new licence plates at the current rate of use.

- Disadvantages:
- There may be an education issue around the second digit as people expect the second character to be an alpha, not a numeric, character.
 - This is an interim solution. The work done will be discarded when NGIS is implemented and a new Revenue Stock Management system is developed.

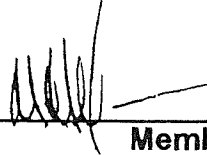
Time Frames:

ICBC estimates that they will require the new series by early 1997. To accommodate this schedule, they require policy direction as soon as possible.

Communication Plan:

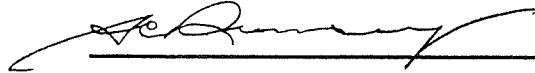
ICBC will notify their brokers of the new formats. MVB will advise the Speed Management Project Team and provide an Information Circular to law enforcement agencies and other licensing jurisdictions.

Submitted by:



Member of Management Committee

Approved:



Not Approved:

_____ Date