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June 28, 2011

Honorable Senator DeSaulnier
Chair, Senate Transportation Committee
California State Senate
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB1215 (Blumenfield) - Support

Dear Senator DeSaulnier:

I am writing to ask your support for Assembly Bill 1215. This bill would require new car dealers and consumers to use electronic vehicle registration by July 1, 2012, for all eligible transactions. Additionally, the Bill will require new and used car dealers in California to obtain reports from the National Motor Vehicle Title Information System (NMVTIS), for each used vehicle they offer for sale when it meets specific criteria. This includes: when a NMVTIS vehicle history report indicates that the vehicle is or has been a "junk" or "salvage vehicle" or when the vehicle has been reported to NMVTIS as a "junk" or "salvage" vehicle by a junkyard, salvage yard or insurance carrier pursuant to 49 U.S.C. 30504.

My personal support for AB1215 stems from my previous experiences in a 30 year career with the California Highway Patrol. Approximately 20 of those years were spent working in vehicle theft investigations throughout Southern California. I cannot tell you during that period, how many times I encountered vehicles "in the field" (on the streets), which when running a registration check through communications, returned with a vague "*Application Pending*" response. The vehicles reportedly had been recently sold, but the only evidence to this transaction was white piece of paper listing a Report of Sale, which was adhered to the front windshield. This document is absent of any security features and many times was obscured by fading or damage. In these current times of rampant identity theft, title washing and outright vehicle theft, it is unimaginable that we do not already have mandatory electronic registration reporting in place. AB1215 will correct this.

Equally important, is the need for consumers to be aware of the true condition of a used vehicle when purchasing it from a dealer. Unfortunately there are many vehicles in the state which have been previously involved in major collisions, fires, and flood damage to the extent that they have been deemed to be total loss vehicles. Countless numbers of vehicles from out of state have also been classified as total loss, due to damage incurred during natural disasters which have recently occurred in other regions of the nation. By way of minimal cosmetic repair combined with title washing, multiple ownership transfers or outright false statements, some of these vehicles can reappear on dealership lots in California with a clear title absent of any indication of prior damage. Not only is

this tremendously unsafe for a potential vehicle buyer in California, but it also opens the door to incidents of fraud and theft.

The NMVTIS database, which is already detecting incidents of title fraud across the nation, is an excellent resource for the detection of unsafe vehicles being offered for sale in California. The NMVTIS program can also be utilized by law enforcement personnel to detect fraud and auto theft when dealing with these salvaged vehicles.

I commend Assembly Member Blumenfield for introducing this legislation, which benefits the California vehicle consumer and law enforcement personnel alike. I urge you to vote in support of AB1215 and thank you for consideration of my view.

Sincerely,

Dennis G. Frias
Sergeant, California Highway Patrol (Ret.)