

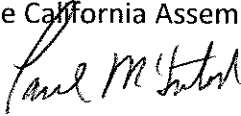


May 12, 2010

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TO: The Honorable Arnold Schwarzenegger
Members of the California Senate
Members of the California Assembly

FROM: Paul McIntosh 
CSAC Executive Director

RE: **Vehicle License Fee (VLF) Funding for Local Public Safety – SUPPORT
EXTENSION**

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties, I write to affirm counties' support for extending the sunset on the dedication of 0.15 percent of the Vehicle License Fee (VLF) to local public safety programs and services. The funding source – absent legislative action – is scheduled to lapse on June 30, 2011. We urge you to consider this extension as the state works to develop a balanced approach for a 2010-11 state spending plan.

As you are aware, the 2009-10 budget approved in February 2009 contained a temporary increase to the VLF, with a portion of the new revenue increment dedicated to support a range of local public safety programs formerly supported by the state general fund. The VLF public safety increment support a range of programs and services ranging from front-line law enforcement services as well as critical intervention and prevention services for juvenile offenders, among others. On the public safety side, dedicated funding for programs such as the Citizens' Option for Public Safety and the Rural and Small County Sheriffs Assistance Grants supports critical services upon which our communities rely for front-line response and baseline coverage in the expansive regions of our 58 counties.

As another example, programs such as the Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act have allowed counties to develop a continuum of appropriate treatment and sanction options that identify and address the needs of youthful offenders. These local efforts have contributed significantly to the steep decrease over the last decade in commitments of youth to state detention facilities, have improved outcomes for these youth, and, to this day, play a major role in our communities' collective ability to address the needs of our youth and their families.

The provision of the VLF as a source for ongoing support for these important local public safety programs is critical. It is for these reasons that we are advocating for an extension of the 0.15 VLF dedicated to these programs. We encourage you to consider the implications to both the state and local governments if action is not taken this year to approve an extension.

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For very practical reasons – not the least of which is the need to have clarity on the ongoing rate so that the Department of Motor Vehicles does not have to begin a months-long process to reprogram its system and notify vehicle owners if there is a risk that the funding will expire in June – action on this important funding issue is needed this year. Without assurance of a sustained funding source, we are extremely concerned about the devastation that could ensue. The prevention, intervention, apprehension, and detention programs and services supported through the VLF ultimately help the state in keeping its own state offender populations – adult and juvenile – in check.

Counties stand ready to work with you and our law enforcement partners to ensure that the VLF – despite its fluctuations and significant declines during our slow economic recovery – remains a resource for sustaining important public safety and intervention programs at the local level.

Thank you for considering CSAC's perspective on this matter. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.