

# **REPORT OF**

# THE

# **STATE AUDITOR**

State Fleet Management/Colorado State Patrol Review of the Joint Report

Performance Audit April, 2001

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April 30, 2001

Members of the Legislative Audit Committee:

This report contains the results of a review of the State Fleet Management/Colorado State Patrol Joint Report on vehicle fleet issues. The audit was conducted pursuant to Section 2-3-103, C.R.S., which authorizes the State Auditor to conduct audits of all departments, institutions, and agencies of state government. The report presents our findings, conclusions, a recommendation, and a joint response from the Departments of Personnel, Public Safety, and the Office of Planning and Budgeting.

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## **RECOMMENDATION LOCATOR**

Rec. No.	Pag e No.	Recommendation Summary	Agency Addressed	Agency Response	Implementation Date
1	17	To adequately fulfill the intent of the Joint Report, the Department of Personnel, the Department of Public Safety, and the Office of State Planning and Budgeting should ensure that any decisions about managing Colorado State Patrol vehicles separately from other state fleet vehicles include the following:  a. A complete and thorough evaluation of the costs and of the savings associated with delegating additional fleet management authority to the CSP, changes in vehicle acquisition practices, staggered delivery of vehicles, use of inmate labor, and outsourcing for the CSP Garage.  b. Implementation of performance measures to be used in monitoring, evaluating, and reporting the impacts of any changes and improvements in outcomes and outputs at the CSP and SFM.  c. Adoption of dates for hiring outside consultants and the completion of evaluations.  d. Commitment to a time line for implementation of the CARS throughout CSP Troop Offices and the elimination of the STARS as the CSP's vehicle management system.	Departments of Personnel and Public Safety, and the Office of State Planning and Budgeting Joint Response	Agree	12/2001

# **Review of the Joint Report**

## **Purpose and Scope**

The Fiscal Year 2001 Long Bill included Footnote #204, which requested a report on the feasibility of managing Colorado State Patrol (CSP) vehicles separately from other state fleet vehicles. The footnote specifically called for the Department of Public Safety (DPS) to develop a "plan for assuming all or part of the responsibilities currently assigned to the State Fleet Management Program." In April 2000, Governor Owens vetoed Footnote #204. In his veto memorandum, the Governor stated:

This footnote requests a report on the feasibility of managing State Patrol vehicles separately from other State fleet vehicles. Part 2 of the footnote requests a plan for the State Patrol to assume some or all of the state fleet management program responsibilities related to State Patrol vehicles. I am concerned about including this specific direction in the footnote language without analyzing whether or not such a plan would be beneficial to the state. I will direct the Department of Public Safety and the Department of Personnel to jointly prepare a report outlining the advantages and disadvantages of separating Patrol vehicles from the State fleet program. I will also ask the departments to forward the joint recommendations to the Joint Budget Committee. I will also request an independent third-party review of the report's findings and recommendations.

In July 2000 the Executive Director of the Department of Personnel requested that the Office of the State Auditor (OSA) provide the "independent third-party review" cited in the Governor's veto instructions. Management from the Colorado State Patrol also expressed interest in the OSA's conducting an audit of this issue. In December 2000 the Departments of Personnel and Public Safety, and the Office of State Planning and Budgeting (OSPB) submitted a joint report (the Joint Report) on the advantages and disadvantages of separating the State Patrol Fleet from the central State Fleet Management (SFM) program. The following report includes descriptive information about both State Fleet Management and the Colorado State Patrol Fleet, a summary of the Joint Report, and our review of the Joint Report, including a discussion of some of the tasks that are still outstanding. In addition, we make one recommendation related to completing the Joint Report consistent with the Governor's footnote. The three agencies involved agree with our recommendation and have established a time line for implementation.

# **State Fleet Management**

The State Fleet Management program (SFM) was statutorily created in 1992, following a State Motor Vehicle Fleet audit by the Office of the State Auditor. The intent of the legislation was to improve efficiency and increase cost-effectiveness by centralizing fleet management operations. The SFM is responsible for the management of all light-duty vehicles used for state business, including passenger sedans, vans, sport utility vehicles, and pickup trucks. Through its centralized operations, the SFM provides a variety of services including purchase and delivery of new state vehicles, development of the centralized fleet budget, purchase of automotive insurance for fleet vehicles, and vehicle rental through the State Motor Pool. In November 2000 there were 5,497 vehicles in the State Fleet, which were distributed among 19 state departments. In addition, there are approximately 46 vehicles available for short-term rental at the Motor Pool located in the downtown Denver Capitol Complex area. Motor Pool vehicles are used by a variety of state agencies on a short-term basis for local and long-distance travel.

Ancillary to SFM is the Motor Vehicle Advisory Council (MVAC). The purpose of the MVAC is to provide state departments a monthly forum for input on fleet issues, particularly as they relate to day-to-day operations. Participation in the MVAC is open to all state departments that use fleet vehicles. In addition, a Strategic Advisory Council has been developed for State Fleet Management and state department executives to engage in long-range fleet planning.

## **Delegation of Fleet Management Responsibilities**

The State Fleet Management program has statutory authority to delegate portions of fleet operations to participating agencies if it determines that delegation is in the best interests of both agencies. The SFM will delegate certain activities based on an agency's need and its ability to administer the delegated responsibilities. For example, the SFM delegated to the Colorado State Patrol the authority to receive new patrol vehicles and outfit them with the necessary law enforcement equipment. In addition, the SFM has designated seven agencies—Higher Education, Transportation, Human Services, Corrections, General Support Services, Public Safety, and Natural Resources—with the authority to operate garages. The agency-operated garages perform maintenance and repair services for state vehicles and then seek reimbursement from SFM for the services performed. The SFM classifies the garages into three categories, depending on the level of service provided. The Colorado State Patrol garage is classified at Category 3, which enables it to do minor repairs as well as outfitting of patrol vehicles. The following table outlines the service levels and the number of garages at each level.

State Fleet Management Garage Service Categories Fiscal Year 2001			
Category	Category Service Level		
1	Equipment and trained staff to perform most vehicle repairs. Work on any SFM vehicles, not just within agency.	12	
2	Limited in scope of repairs. Work only on vehicles assigned to the agency, except in emergency cases.	12	
3	Centralize billing and parts distribution to vehicles in the field. Minor services such as lamp replacement and car washes, and specialized vehicle preparation.	12	
TOTAL		36	
Source: Office of the State Auditor Analysis of State Fleet Management Data.			

## **Colorado Automotive Reporting System**

In 1997 SFM implemented the Colorado Automotive Reporting System (CARS), a centralized fleet information database. The primary component of CARS is a vehicle database that contains detailed information about each state-owned vehicle, including information on repair work, accidents, and billing. The CARS also has the ability to track vehicle movement and vehicle assignments, to establish and track all vehicle loans with lenders, to issue vehicle fuel cards and track fuel expenses, and to reconcile transaction errors from vendors. The CARS also has a linkage to the Colorado Financial Reporting System (COFRS), which entails an automatic conversion of CARS vehicle maintenance, fuel, and repair data into payment transactions for recording in COFRS.

## **State Fleet Management Budget**

For Fiscal Year 2001 State Fleet Management's appropriation was \$28.1 million, with a total of 15 FTE assigned to fleet management and 2 FTE assigned to central motor pool operations. As the table below indicates, more than one-half of the SFM

appropriation—\$15.2 million, or 54 percent—is for vehicle replacement, including vehicle lease, purchase, or lease/purchase.

State Fleet Management Fiscal Year 2001			
Line Item	Appropriation	Percent of Total Appropriation	FTE
Vehicle Replacement	\$15,226,379	54.2	NA
Operating Expenses	11,867,305	42.2	NA
Personal Services	710,364	2.5	17
Treasury Loan Payback	300,000	1.1	NA
TOTAL	\$28,104,048	100	17
Source: Fiscal Year 2001 Long Bill Supplemental.			

## **Colorado State Patrol Fleet**

In November 2000 the Colorado Department of Public Safety (DPS) had the fourth largest fleet among all state agencies. Only the Departments of Higher Education, Natural Resources, and Transportation had a greater number of vehicles assigned to them than did DPS. The Department of Public Safety's 770 vehicles represented 14 percent of the State's total 5,497 vehicles at that time. Within the DPS, the Colorado State Patrol maintains the largest fleet. Of the Department's approximately 770 vehicles, CSP vehicles represent about 92 percent, or 710. The Colorado Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has 56 vehicles, making it the second largest fleet within DPS. It should be noted that the CBI has expressed no interest in separating from State Fleet Management.

Most of the State Patrol's total fleet is in use at any given time. However, some vehicles are in storage at the CSP Garage. Of the total 710 vehicles in the CSP's fleet at the time of this review, about 21 percent, or 151, were in storage. The stored vehicles are those that have been delivered by the manufacturer and are intended to replace 151 of the vehicles currently on the road, but have yet to be outfitted. Outfitting refers to the modifications that are made to CSP vehicles prior to their use on the road. Modifications may include the installation of two-way radios, reflective markings, Mobile Data Computers (MDC), and emergency lighting.

### Vehicles per FTE

In October 1997 a CSP Vehicle Allocation Committee established a vehicle allocation formula that Troop Offices are required to follow for field personnel. Basically, the formula provides for an initial baseline of one Patrol vehicle for every two troopers. Geographic and response logistics may be a factor affecting the formula. Depending on the number of troopers, one or more spare Patrol vehicles may also be assigned per Troop Office. According to the CSP, spare vehicles are used primarily to rotate law enforcement platforms for scheduled maintenance and for emergency situations that require more than the typical number of troopers on the highway. According to July 2000 data compiled by the State Patrol, there were approximately seven patrol vehicles for every ten troopers on the road at that time. Also, at that time there were 198 vehicles for the 198 field supervisors.

## **State Patrol Fleet Budget**

For Fiscal Year 2001 the Colorado State Patrol's Fleet appropriation is \$8.1 million, with a total of 13 FTE assigned exclusively to fleet operations. In addition, there was a \$1.4 million capital construction appropriation to fund the second phase of the Mobile Data Computer (MDC) initiative. As the table on the following page shows, about half of the State Patrol's fleet appropriation—\$4.0 million, or 49.3 percent—is for fixed costs or vehicle lease payments. Operating or variable costs are the costs for each vehicle including insurance, maintenance costs, and fuel. No distinct appropriation is made to cover variable costs. The CSP may use its total agency operating budget for various purposes, including the variable costs for operating its vehicle fleet.

Colorado State Patrol Fleet Appropriation Fiscal Year 2001			
Line Item	Appropriation	Percent of Total Appropriation	FTE
Vehicle Lease Payment (a)	\$4,000,896	49.3	NA
Operating Expenses	2,556,930	31.5	NA
Garage Operations	587,097	7.2	2
Garage Mechanics	355,858	4.4	8
Mobile Data Computer	544,611	6.7	3
Indirect Cost Allocation	68,757	.9	NA
TOTAL	\$8,114,149	100	13

Source: Office of the State Auditor analysis of the State Fleet Management/ Colorado State Patrol Joint Report.
Note: (a) Lease Payments are considered fixed costs and are appropriated by the General Assembly in special line items labeled "Vehicle Lease Purchase." Approximately \$3.7 million of the Patrol's total \$4 million appropriation for vehicle lease payments was derived from the Highway Users Tax Fund (HUTF).

## **State Trooper Activity Reporting System**

The State Trooper Activity Reporting System (STARS) is a centralized database used by the Colorado State Patrol for a variety of management purposes. Some of the information maintained in the system relates to trooper activities and timekeeping, enforcement actions (citations written and arrests made), and accident investigations. In addition, STARS contains information such as fuel usage, vehicle mileage, and detailed preventative maintenance for all CSP vehicles. The State Patrol began using STARS for fleet management purposes prior to the 1997 implementation of the Colorado Automotive Reporting System (CARS) within State Fleet Management.

# The CSP Maintains There Are Problems With the Current Fleet Management Arrangement

The Colorado State Patrol believes its fleet is unique from most other state agencies' fleets. According to the CSP, its vehicles serve

...primarily as a 'law enforcement platform' and not merely as a mode of transportation. Highway safety, accident investigations, and incident response times are directly affected by fleet operations. In short, a trooper without a fully operational law enforcement platform is rendered ineffective. Patrol vehicles should not be managed as simply a state asset but rather as an essential public safety tool that directly determines the quality of services provided to the public. This fundamental distinction separates the State Patrol's reliance on and utilization of vehicles from other state agencies.

State Patrol staff have indicated that the timing of new vehicle delivery, the method of acquisition, and the ability to repair and replace vehicles are all areas in which improvements are needed to adequately address its unique fleet demands. In addition, issues of fee assessment and full access and use of the CARS system are problematic for CSP. Also, according to the CSP, its 22 Troop Commanders spend "an inordinate amount of time managing the impact of SFM practices and procedures in order to ensure that the statewide vehicle policy does not determine the State's public safety policy." However, the specific areas in which the CSP could be delegated greater responsibility are not spelled out in the Joint Report, and the costs and benefits of various options have not been clearly established. We understand that CSP and SFM staff are working to resolve these issues and that the fleet tasks to be delegated to CSP will be delineated in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) along with effectiveness measures to determine the success of the delegation.

# **Joint Report Analysis**

As previously stated, the Office of the State Auditor was asked to review the report prepared jointly by the Departments of Personnel and Public Safety and the Office of State Planning and Budget (OSPB) on the advantages and disadvantages of separating CSP vehicles from the State Fleet Management program. Overall, we found that the Joint Report is interim in nature and, therefore, does not provide a comprehensive basis for formulating final conclusions. In the Report the advantages and disadvantages of various options are not thoroughly described or analyzed; factual data needed to evaluate impacts are lacking in numerous cases; and the reasons for the State Patrol's desire to be delegated responsibility for various fleet activities are not clearly articulated or quantified. Despite these limitations, the Joint Report does indicate a willingness by the parties to work together to resolve issues so that any changes made will be based on increasing effectiveness in public safety, improving the quality of CSP fleet operations, and enhancing services to the public.

## **Summary of the Joint Report**

The jointly prepared State Fleet Management and Colorado State Patrol report discusses a number of issues surrounding the current operations of the State Patrol's vehicle fleet. As the table on the following page shows, the Report presents some options related to various issues and makes recommendations to each.

State Fleet Management/ Colorado State Patrol Joint Report Recommendations			
Issue	Current Method	Jointly Recommended Method	
Delegation vs. Opting Out	SFM centralization	Delegated authority to be determined through a series of joint meetings. One-year pilot project to begin July 2001.	
Patrol Vehicle Acquisition			
Internal or External Financing	External financing (installment purchase)	Require Future Independent Analysis	
Replacement Strategy	80,000 miles/36 months	Require Future Independent Analysis	
Refurbish Old Patrol Vehicles	No refurbishment	No refurbishment	
Reuse of Decommissioned Patrol Vehicles	Sale to other law enforcement agencies/ public auction	Sale to other law enforcement agencies/ public auction	
Projecting State Patrol Mileage for Vehicle Replacement	Current Usage - Projecting vehicle replacement dates based on individual vehicle mileage projections	Troop mileage profile - Projecting vehicle replacement dates from individual troop history based upon average mileage	
Maintenance Decisions			
Accident/totaled vehicles	No additional vehicles - No funding allocated to replace totaled vehicles	Additional vehicles - Funding provided to replace totaled vehicles	
Scheduled Maintenance	CARS/STARS mileage collection	CARS mileage collection system	
Demand Maintenance	Joint repair decisions	Additional repair decision options	
<b>Delivery of Patrol Vehicles</b>	Staggered delivery/ four months	Staggered delivery/eight months	
Patrol Vehicle Preparation	State Patrol garage/ limited outsourcing	Increased outsourcing and improved maintenance operations	
Information Management Systems	Operate CARS & STARS	Transition to CARS	

**Source:** Office of the State Auditor analysis of State Fleet Management/Colorado State Patrol Joint

Report.

**Note:** CARS - Colorado Automotive Reporting System

STARS - State Trooper Activity Reporting System.

### **Delegation**

The Joint Report recommends delegating certain fleet responsibilities to the CSP. The delegation is to be finalized through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that is scheduled to begin in July 2001. It is not clear from the Joint Report, however, what additional activities will be delegated to the CSP beyond those for which it is already responsible, such as the CSP Garage. Therefore, it is difficult to determine whether the State Patrol has the competencies and capabilities to assume the additional responsibilities without increasing costs or reducing effectiveness. Without a full understanding of the performance criteria and the assessment process to be used, including costs, the success of the delegated activities will be difficult to monitor and analyze.

#### **Vehicle Acquisition**

The issue of acquisition revolves around the most cost-effective method of procuring police-package vehicles. Closely tied to this issue and to the options reviewed by the Joint Report is the so-called replacement strategy or the mileage at which patrol vehicles are to be replaced. Currently, SFM purchases vehicles through external financing on an installment basis. State Patrol vehicles are financed over 36 months, which is the projected time at which vehicles are estimated to reach the 80,000-mile minimum. By statute, state-owned motor vehicles are not to be routinely replaced until they have been driven for 75,600 miles or more. Other state agencies have a repayment schedule that corresponds with their 100,000-mile replacement strategy minimum.

According to the State Patrol, the current method of acquisition and the 80,000 mile minimum is problematic because many of its vehicles reach this mileage minimum before the 36-month period is reached. Consequently, some Patrol vehicles must be kept on the road beyond the 80,000 miles, which according to State Patrol staff, makes these particular vehicles less viable and responsive as "law enforcement platforms" and creates additional repair and maintenance costs. The Joint Report found that the average mileage for Patrol vehicles at disposal was 89,812 based on a review of vehicles sold over the last three fiscal years. According to recent data, of the 176 vehicles currently identified for replacement in Fiscal Year 2002, 157 exceed the 80,000-mile mark. Of these 157 vehicles, 35 are projected to exceed 80,000 miles, 33 will have mileage over 90,000, and 89 will exceed the 100,000-mile mark.

The options reviewed by the Joint Report are to maintain the current practice or to lower the mileage threshold from 80,000 to 50,000 miles in order to increase the resale value. The Joint Report recommends an independent analyst be hired to examine this issue in

detail and to find data to eliminate as many uncertainties as possible and to more completely quantify any costs or savings. The need to conduct additional analysis before implementing changes is clearly appropriate. It is essential to address the total cost of ownership to form a sound decision as to how the agencies should proceed. Primary among the issues that will need to be examined is how much the resale value will increase if the mileage threshold is reduced. Also central to determining the feasibility of resale will be establishing whether a sufficient demand exists for used CSP law enforcement vehicles among other law enforcement agencies. Also, any changes in the repair and maintenance costs associated with lowering the mileage thresholds need to be determined. Finally, dates need to be set for hiring outside consultants, for the consultant's deliverables, and for final decisions on this matter.

#### **Staggered Delivery of Patrol Vehicles**

The most pressing concern surrounding this issue is whether the capacity exists among the CSP Garage staff to outfit the planned number of vehicles to be received in a timely manner. According to the Joint report, "by having vehicles delivered on an eight-month staggered basis, the State Patrol should be able to reduce storage costs because deliveries would more closely correspond to the ability of the CSP Garage to outfit police-package vehicles." Currently the CSP Garage is able to outfit approximately 15 vehicles per month and is scheduled to replace over 90 vehicles in Fiscal Year 2001 and 45 vehicles in Fiscal Year 2002. Although staggering vehicle delivery should alleviate some of the backlog of vehicles in storage, the success of this proposal is contingent upon overall expedited CSP Garage operations. The Joint Report indicates that both increased outsourcing and the use of inmate labor (from Camp George West) have potential for improving Garage operations. However, neither of these options has been thoroughly analyzed in the Report. The use of inmate labor may be a reasonable approach, but the potential for problems relating to the safety of patrol vehicles, quality control, and the reliability of an available, trained workforce should be addressed. More importantly, if the CSP Garage is experiencing chronic delays in outfitting vehicles and in its routine repair and maintenance activities, then more permanent and longer-term solutions are needed to improve service and reduce delays. Options for more rapid deployment should continue to be explored to realize substantive improvements in this area.

#### **CARS/STARS Data Systems**

Two separate and distinct information systems are currently used to manage the Colorado State Patrol Fleet—the Colorado Automotive Reporting System (CARS) and the State Trooper Activity Reporting System (STARS). The CSP began using STARS prior to centralization of state fleet operations and the implementation of CARS. The STARS system keeps detailed preventative maintenance information for each law enforcement vehicle as well as mileage and fuel usage data. Each Troop Office and the CSP Garage have access to STARS. As previously noted, CARS is the central fleet information system maintained by State Fleet Management. Presently, there are about 215 users connected to CARS. However, only two State Patrol locations—CSP headquarters and the CSP garage—are connected. Consequently, much of the information entered into STARS must also be entered into CARS by staff at the CSP garage. For example, CSP garage staff report that they enter information on new vehicles and vehicle movement between troops into both the STARS and CARS systems. Because these dual systems are in use, each month the CSP garage must electronically transmit a STARS mileage report to SFM to reconcile any discrepancies between the STARS mileage report and the CARS mileage report before billing can occur. According to CSP, in some instances, the reconciliation process can take as long as three business days. The operation of two data systems and the dual entry of data is not only inefficient but can increase the chances for errors.

Two primary issues surrounding the State Patrol's need to continue to use STARS cited in the Joint Report pertain to the preventative maintenance tracking capabilities in CARS and the level of CARS availability to CSP Troop offices. Specifically, the report indicates that the detailed maintenance schedules tracked in STARS are not presently available in CARS and that the State Patrol relies on STARS for this reason. The report also cites CARS access limitations for CSP troop offices due to issues with PC equipment and firewall security.

State Patrol and State Fleet Management representatives report that they are collaborating on connectivity issues with CARS and are approaching a resolution. In addition, State Patrol representatives indicate that contrary to statements in the Joint Report, CARS does have a preventative maintenance tracking module. The recommendation made in the Joint Report regarding CARS/STARS states that State Patrol's eventual transition to CARS in FY 2001-2002 would produce the optimum information technology system to manage State Patrol's vehicles. However, the recommendation does not establish an implementation schedule for the transition. Establishing agreed-upon time frames will help CSP and SFM more effectively plan for the transition and for the additional tasks referenced in the report such as integration of State Patrol's new Records Management System into CARS. More importantly, commitment to a specific date should facilitate full

implementation of CARS throughout all of the Troop Offices and a discontinuation of the use of dual systems.

#### **Recommendation No. 1:**

To adequately fulfill the intent of the Joint Report, the Department of Personnel, the Department of Public Safety, and the Office of State Planning and Budgeting should ensure that any decisions about managing Colorado State Patrol vehicles separately from other state fleet vehicles include the following:

- a. A complete and thorough evaluation of the costs and of the savings associated with delegating additional fleet management authority to the CSP, changes in vehicle acquisition practices, staggered delivery of vehicles, use of inmate labor, and outsourcing for the CSP Garage.
- Implementation of performance measures to be used in monitoring, evaluating, and reporting the impacts of any changes and improvements in outcomes and outputs at CSP and SFM.
- c. Adoption of dates for hiring outside consultants and the completion of evaluations.
- d. Commitment to a time line for implementation of CARS throughout CSP Troop Offices and the elimination of STARS as the CSP's vehicle management system.

# Department of Personnel, Department of Public Safety, and Office of State Planning and Budgeting Joint Response:

a. Agree. CSP and SFM will identify all known and estimated costs associated with ongoing efforts to delegate certain tasks and improve operational efficiencies. Costs and savings will be identified through the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between CSP and SFM, use of a consultant as identified in the Joint Report, and operational efficiencies pursued in the CSP Garage. This MOU is in the process of being developed as well as an RFP for consultant services.

- b. Agree. The MOU will address performance measures for monitoring, evaluating, and reporting impacts of changes. Ongoing evaluation should lead to further efforts to refine delegation and the issues driving this initial joint endeavor. Performance measures will be reviewed on a quarterly basis.
- c. Agree. An RFP for consultant services with specific objectives is being developed with a selection target date of July 1, 2001. It is further estimated that the study should be completed by September 1, 2001. The selection and implementation of work is predicated on the cost of this work being reasonable and within budget limitations.
- d. Agree. CSP and SFM have been identifying the technical issues for implementation of CARS. At this time, full implementation is targeted for the end of calendar year 2001, but ongoing efforts appear to reflect an earlier implementation date.

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