

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
STATE OF MONTANA

GREG GIANFORTE
GOVERNOR



KRISTEN JURAS
LT. GOVERNOR

November 23, 2021

Senator Diane Sands, Chair
Senator Gordon Vance, Vice Chair
State Administration and Veteran's Affairs Interim Committee

Dear Chair Sands and Vice Chair Vance:

Thank you for your November 4 letter regarding license plate reissuance requirements during what appears to be a nationwide aluminum shortage. I appreciate the intent of your letter, but I do not believe emergency authority is the solution to this particular situation.

The Biden Administration's lack of leadership has led to supply chain problems for numerous goods and services. Nonetheless, I believe the situation is temporary and therefore does not warrant an emergency declaration, which must be based on a disaster. A disaster within the meaning of MCA 10-3-103(4) requires "the occurrence or imminent threat of widespread or severe damage, injury, or loss of life or property...." The license plate manufacturing situation does not meet this threshold. Even if I was to declare a state of emergency, House Bill 230 passed last session only allows the declaration to be in force for 45 days.

I am satisfied with the temporary solution just adopted by Montana Correctional Enterprises (MCE) and the Montana Motor Vehicle Division (MVD). MCE will modify the manufacturing process to create an alternative license plate. These license plates will be printed on the standard reflective sheeting and, instead of being adhered to an aluminum base, will be placed in weather-proof plastic sleeves like those utilized by automobile dealers. Once aluminum supplies are restored, MCE will work with MVD and the counties to develop an efficient and cost-effective way to replace alternative plates at no cost to citizens.

Declaring an emergency is a serious undertaking that I do not take lightly. The supply chain issues being faced by consumers and citizens are unfortunate and unnecessary, but the temporary solution adopted by MCE and MVD should get Montanans through the worst of the nation's aluminum supply chain challenges.

If you have specific questions about the alternative license plate program, please contact MCE's Scott Griner at scott.griner@mt.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Greg Gianforte".

Greg Gianforte
Governor

CC: Brian Gootkin, Director, Department of Corrections
Austin Knudsen, Attorney General