

First Regular Session  
Seventy-third General Assembly  
STATE OF COLORADO

**ENGROSSED**

*This Version Includes All Amendments Adopted  
on Second Reading in the House of Introduction*

LLS NO. 21-0413.01 Jason Gelender x4330

**SENATE BILL 21-069**

---

**SENATE SPONSORSHIP**

**Priola,**

**HOUSE SPONSORSHIP**

**Valdez A.,**

---

**Senate Committees**

Transportation & Energy  
Finance  
Appropriations

**House Committees**

---

**A BILL FOR AN ACT**

101      **CONCERNING LICENSE PLATES, AND, IN CONNECTION THEREWITH,**  
102            **SPECIFYING THAT THE LICENSE PLATES OF A MOTOR VEHICLE**  
103            **THAT IS CLASSIFIED AS CLASS C PERSONAL PROPERTY EXPIRE**  
104            **UPON THE SALE OR TRANSFER OF THE MOTOR VEHICLE,**  
105            **AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF LICENSE PLATES IN PREVIOUSLY**  
106            **RETIRED STYLES, AND MAKING AN APPROPRIATION.**

---

**Bill Summary**

*(Note: This summary applies to this bill as introduced and does not reflect any amendments that may be subsequently adopted. If this bill passes third reading in the house of introduction, a bill summary that applies to the reengrossed version of this bill will be available at <http://leg.colorado.gov>.)*

The bill specifies that:

Shading denotes HOUSE amendment. Double underlining denotes SENATE amendment.  
*Capital letters or bold & italic numbers indicate new material to be added to existing statute.*  
*Dashes through the words indicate deletions from existing statute.*

SENATE  
Amended 2nd Reading  
May 4, 2021

- The license plates of a motor vehicle that is Class C personal property for purposes of the laws governing the levying of specific ownership tax and registration of vehicles expire upon the transfer of the owner's title or interest in the motor vehicle;
- If either the expired license plates are personalized license plates or the owner wishes to continue to use the same combination of letters or numbers on the owner's expired license plates that were not originally issued as personalized license plates, the owner retains the priority right to use the combination of letters or numbers displayed on the expired license plates to the extent provided for in current law and may, after surrendering the expired license plates to the department of revenue (department), apply for personalized license plates that use the combination in the manner specified in current law when registering another motor vehicle; and
- The department shall approve any application for personalized license plates received from an individual who wishes to retain the same combination of letters or numbers displayed on the individual's expired license plates and who has surrendered the expired plates to the department unless the department determines that the combination is misleading or duplicates another registration number or that, due to evolving social mores, the combination, despite having previously been issued, carries connotations offensive to good taste or decency;

Class C personal property includes passenger cars, noncommercial light trucks, and motorcycles. The bill does not apply to the transfer or assignment of an owner's interest in Class C personal property that is a horseless carriage.

The bill also authorizes the department to issue license plates in previously retired styles to individuals who request such plates and to charge additional fees for such plates.

---

1 *Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:*

2           **SECTION 1. Legislative declaration.** (1) The general assembly  
3 finds and declares that:

4           (a) Recent national studies have determined that 4% of vehicles  
5 on the road in the United States are not properly registered or the

1 registration is expired. In Colorado it is estimated that as many as 4 out  
2 of every 10 cars on the road are not properly registered and licensed.

3 (b) Vehicles out of registration compliance also commonly lack  
4 insurance coverage and emissions testing documentation.

5 (c) Unregistered and improperly licensed vehicles contribute to  
6 significant state and local shortfalls in revenue for critical transportation  
7 and other needs.

8 (d) The financial impact of traffic congestion in the United States  
9 is calculated to be \$166 billion annually, reaching \$225 billion by 2025.  
10 Readable license plates may be needed to implement traffic congestion  
11 mitigation measures in the future.

12 (e) Law enforcement and public safety officials rely on plate  
13 readability and reflectivity to maintain safety on Colorado roads during  
14 critical operations, such as an Amber alert. Seventy percent of serious  
15 crimes involve a vehicle, and license plates are a low-cost and effective  
16 way for law enforcement to identify vehicles. License plates must be  
17 readable from a safe distance and readable from a vehicle in motion.

18 (f) License plates are often the only highly reflective element on  
19 vehicles, providing a critically important safety feature for stalled  
20 vehicles at night.

21 (g) Automated tolling systems on Colorado roads require legible,  
22 readable license plates to ensure accurate record keeping and to capture  
23 revenue from tollway users during the day and at night.

24 (h) The substantial increase in new residents from other states  
25 driving vehicles that are not registered in Colorado has contributed to the  
26 loss of critical revenue for transportation and other purposes.

27 (i) Despite substantial growth in the number of motor vehicles on

1 Colorado's roads, Colorado has not implemented a periodic license plate  
2 replacement program in nearly 30 years.

3 (j) A phased-in license plate reissue program will provide for  
4 increased public safety and effectiveness of license plates while  
5 minimizing costs and maximizing convenience for drivers.

6 (k) On average, license plates lose 50% of their reflectivity within  
7 5 to 10 years of use and the average age of motor vehicles in Colorado is  
8 7 to 10 years.

9 (2) Therefore, the general assembly declares that it is in the best  
10 interest of the people of the state of Colorado to implement a phased-in  
11 license plate reissue program that will extinguish license plates upon the  
12 sale or transfer to a new owner and require motorists to get new license  
13 plates at no additional cost to them. Phasing in new license plates in this  
14 fashion will improve registration and license plate compliance, generate  
15 new and needed revenue for transportation and other purposes, improve  
16 vehicle insurance compliance rates, improve vehicle emission control  
17 compliance rates, enhance public safety and law enforcement, and  
18 improve tollway revenue capture rates.

19 **SECTION 2.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 24-30-2208, **amend**  
20 (2)(b) as follows:

21 **24-30-2208. Sale of registration numbers.** (2) (b) Upon  
22 receiving the committee's request, the department of revenue shall verify  
23 whether the plates are currently issued. FOR PURPOSES OF THIS  
24 SUBSECTION (2)(b) AND SUBSECTION (2)(c) OF THIS SECTION, A PLATE  
25 THAT EXPIRES DUE TO THE OPERATION OF SECTION 42-3-115 (5)(a) IS  
26 CONSIDERED CURRENTLY ISSUED UNTIL THE RIGHT OF THE OWNER OF THE  
27 MOTOR VEHICLE TO WHICH THE EXPIRED PLATE WAS AFFIXED TO APPLY TO

1 USE THE REGISTRATION NUMBER OF THE EXPIRED PLATE WHEN  
2 REGISTERING ANOTHER MOTOR VEHICLE EXPIRES. If the plate is not  
3 currently issued, the department shall reserve the registration number  
4 until the committee notifies the department to release the registration  
5 number.

6 **SECTION 3.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 42-3-115, **add (5)** as  
7 follows:

8 **42-3-115. Registration upon transfer.** (5) (a) EXCEPT AS  
9 OTHERWISE PROVIDED IN SUBSECTIONS (5)(b) AND (5)(c) OF THIS SECTION,  
10 ON AND AFTER JANUARY 1, 2022, WHENEVER THE OWNER OF A MOTOR  
11 VEHICLE THAT IS CLASS C PERSONAL PROPERTY, AS DEFINED IN SECTION  
12 42-3-106 (2)(c), TRANSFERS OR ASSIGNS THE OWNER'S TITLE OR INTEREST,  
13 THE NUMBER PLATES ISSUED TO THE OWNER FOR THE VEHICLE EXPIRE AND  
14 SHALL NOT BE TRANSFERRED TO ANY OTHER MOTOR VEHICLE. AN OWNER  
15 OF A MOTOR VEHICLE WHOSE NUMBER PLATES      EXPIRE DUE TO THE  
16 OPERATION OF THIS SUBSECTION (5)(a)      WHO WISHES TO RETAIN THE  
17 SAME COMBINATION OF LETTERS OR NUMBERS DISPLAYED ON THE EXPIRED  
18 LICENSE PLATES RETAINS THE PRIORITY RIGHT TO USE THE COMBINATION  
19 AND MAY, AFTER SURRENDERING THE EXPIRED PLATES TO THE  
20 DEPARTMENT, APPLY FOR PERSONALIZED LICENSE PLATES WITH THE  
21 COMBINATION IN THE MANNER SPECIFIED IN SECTION 42-3-211 WHEN  
22 REGISTERING ANOTHER MOTOR VEHICLE.

23 (b) SUBSECTION (5)(a) OF THIS SECTION DOES NOT APPLY TO THE  
24 TRANSFER OR ASSIGNMENT OF AN OWNER'S TITLE OR INTEREST IN CLASS  
25 C PERSONAL PROPERTY THAT HAS NUMBER PLATES THAT ARE  
26 PERSONALIZED LICENSE PLATES ISSUED IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION  
27 42-3-211 OR THAT HAVE A VALUABLE REGISTRATION NUMBER THAT HAS

1 BEEN RESERVED FOR USE UNDER THE "LAURA HERSHEY DISABILITY  
2 SUPPORT ACT", PART 22 OF ARTICLE 30 OF TITLE 24.

3 (c) IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 42-12-301 (6), SUBSECTION  
4 (5)(a) OF THIS SECTION DOES NOT APPLY TO THE TRANSFER OR  
5 ASSIGNMENT OF AN OWNER'S TITLE OR INTEREST IN CLASS C PERSONAL  
6 PROPERTY THAT IS A HORSELESS CARRIAGE.

7 **SECTION 4.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, **add** 42-3-206.5 as  
8 follows:

9 **42-3-206.5. Issuance of plates in a retired style authorized -**  
10 **additional fee.** (1) SUBJECT TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF THIS SECTION, THE  
11 DEPARTMENT MAY ISSUE LICENSE PLATES IN THE PREVIOUSLY RETIRED  
12 STYLE THAT HAD WHITE LETTERS AND NUMBERS ON A BACKGROUND OF  
13 GREEN MOUNTAINS AND A WHITE SKY FOR PASSENGER CARS OR TRUCKS  
14 NOT OVER SIXTEEN THOUSAND POUNDS EMPTY WEIGHT.

15 (2) THE DEPARTMENT MAY ONLY ISSUE PLATES IN THE PREVIOUSLY  
16 RETIRED STYLE IF THE DEPARTMENT DETERMINES THAT DEMAND FOR THE  
17 STYLE, INCLUDING WILLINGNESS TO PAY AN ADDITIONAL FEE THAT FULLY  
18 DEFRAYS THE COSTS OF PRODUCING THE LICENSE PLATES IN THE STYLE, IS  
19 SUFFICIENTLY HIGH TO JUSTIFY PRODUCTION OF THE LICENSE PLATES.

20 (3) AN APPLICANT MAY APPLY FOR PERSONALIZED LICENSE PLATES  
21 IN THE PREVIOUSLY RETIRED STYLE IF THE DEPARTMENT OFFERS SUCH  
22 PLATES FOR PURCHASE. IF THE APPLICANT COMPLIES WITH SECTION  
23 42-3-211, THE DEPARTMENT MAY ISSUE SUCH PLATES UPON PAYMENT OF  
24 THE ADDITIONAL FEE REQUIRED BY SECTION 42-3-211 (6) FOR  
25 PERSONALIZED LICENSE PLATES PLUS TWENTY-FIVE DOLLARS. THE  
26 TWENTY-FIVE DOLLARS PAID ON TOP OF THE ADDITIONAL FEE REQUIRED BY  
27 SECTION 42-3-211 (6) SHALL BE TRANSMITTED TO THE STATE TREASURER,

1 WHO SHALL CREDIT THE TWENTY-FIVE DOLLARS TO THE DISABILITY  
2 SUPPORT FUND CREATED IN SECTION 24-30-2205.5. IF THE APPLICANT HAS  
3 EXISTING PERSONALIZED LICENSE PLATES FOR A MOTOR VEHICLE, THE  
4 APPLICANT MAY TRANSFER THE COMBINATION OF LETTERS OR NUMBERS  
5 TO A NEW SET OF LICENSE PLATES IN THE PREVIOUSLY RETIRED STYLE FOR  
6 THE VEHICLE UPON PAYING THE FEE IMPOSED BY SECTION 42-3-211 (6)(a)  
7 AND UPON TURNING IN SUCH EXISTING PLATES TO THE DEPARTMENT AS  
8 REQUIRED BY THE DEPARTMENT. A PERSON WHO HAS OBTAINED  
9 PERSONALIZED LICENSE PLATES IN THE PREVIOUSLY RETIRED STYLE UNDER  
10 THIS SUBSECTION (3) SHALL PAY THE ANNUAL FEE IMPOSED BY SECTION  
11 42-3-211 (6)(b) TO RENEW SUCH PLATES. THE FEES IMPOSED BY THIS  
12 SUBSECTION (3) ARE IN ADDITION TO ALL OTHER TAXES AND FEES IMPOSED  
13 FOR LICENSE PLATES IN THE PREVIOUSLY RETIRED STYLE.

14 (4) THE AMOUNT OF THE TAXES AND FEES FOR LICENSE PLATES IN  
15 THE PREVIOUSLY RETIRED STYLE IS THE SAME AS THE AMOUNT OF THE  
16 TAXES AND FEES SPECIFIED FOR REGULAR MOTOR VEHICLE PLATES PLUS AN  
17 ADDITIONAL ANNUAL FEE SET BY THE DEPARTMENT IN THE LESSER OF THE  
18 AMOUNT NECESSARY TO DEFRAID THE ACTUAL COSTS OF PRODUCING AND  
19 ISSUING THE PLATES PLUS TWENTY-FIVE DOLLARS OR SEVENTY-FIVE  
20 DOLLARS. THE ADDITIONAL FEE SHALL BE TRANSMITTED TO THE STATE  
21 TREASURER, WHO SHALL CREDIT IT TO THE LICENSE PLATE CASH FUND  
22 CREATED IN SECTION 42-3-301 (1)(b); EXCEPT THAT TWENTY-FIVE  
23 DOLLARS OF THE FEE SHALL BE CREDITED TO THE DISABILITY SUPPORT  
24 FUND CREATED IN SECTION 24-30-2205.5.

25 (5) ALL APPLICATIONS FOR LICENSE PLATES IN THE PREVIOUSLY  
26 RETIRED STYLE MUST BE MADE DIRECTLY TO THE DEPARTMENT.

27 (6) THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT MAY PREPARE

1 ANY SPECIAL FORMS AND PROMULGATE ANY RULES NECESSARY TO  
2 IMPLEMENT THIS SECTION.

3              

4 **SECTION 5.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 42-3-301, **amend**  
5 (2)(a) as follows:

6 **42-3-301. License plate cash fund - license plate fees.**

7 (2) (a) The fees imposed pursuant to subsection (1) of this section ~~shall~~  
8 ~~be~~ ARE limited to the amount necessary to recover the costs of the  
9 production and distribution of any license plates, decals, or validating tabs  
10 issued pursuant to this article 3, INCLUDING ADDITIONAL PRODUCTION AND  
11 DISTRIBUTION RESULTING FROM THE ENACTMENT OF SECTION 42-3-115  
12 (5)(a) BY SENATE BILL 21-069, ENACTED IN 2021, and the related support  
13 functions provided to the department of revenue by the     division. The  
14 correctional industries advisory committee, established pursuant to  
15 section 17-24-104 (2), shall annually review and recommend to the  
16 director of the division the amounts of the fees to be imposed pursuant to  
17 subsection (1) of this section. The director of the division, in cooperation  
18 and consultation with the department of revenue and the office of state  
19 planning and budgeting, shall annually establish the amounts of the fees  
20 imposed pursuant to subsection (1) of this section to recover the division's  
21 costs pursuant to this subsection (2).

22 **SECTION 6. Appropriation.** (1) For the 2021-22 state fiscal  
23 year, \$598,290 is appropriated to the department of revenue for use by the  
24 division of motor vehicles. This appropriation consists of \$102,600  
25 General Fund and \$495,690 from the license plate cash fund created in  
26 section 42-3-301 (1)(b), C.R.S. To implement this act, the division may  
27 use this appropriation as follows:



1           (a) \$102,600 from the General Fund for DRIVES maintenance  
2           and support; and

3           (b) \$495,690 from the license plate cash fund for license plate  
4           ordering.

5           (2) For the 2021-22 state fiscal year, \$256,970 is appropriated to  
6           the department of corrections for use by the division of correctional  
7           industries. This appropriation is from reappropriated funds received from  
8           the department of revenue. To implement this act, the division may use  
9           this appropriation as follows:

10           (a) \$1,786 for personal services;

11           (b) \$40,004 for operating expenses; and

12           (c) \$215,180 for raw materials.

13           **SECTION 7. Act subject to petition - effective date.** This act  
14 takes effect at 12:01 a.m. on the day following the expiration of the  
15 ninety-day period after final adjournment of the general assembly; except  
16 that, if a referendum petition is filed pursuant to section 1 (3) of article V  
17 of the state constitution against this act or an item, section, or part of this  
18 act within such period, then the act, item, section, or part will not take  
19 effect unless approved by the people at the general election to be held in  
20 November 2022 and, in such case, will take effect on the date of the  
21 official declaration of the vote thereon by the governor.