STATE CAPITOL
P.O. BOX 942849
SACRAMENTO, CA 94249-0115

California Legislature

August 26, 2024

Steve Gordon, Director
California Department of Motor Vehicles
2415 1st Ave., Mail Station F101
Sacramento, CA 95818-2606

Dear Director Gordon:

We, the undersigned members of the Orange County Legislative Delegation, are writing to **strongly urge the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), in coordination with the Department of General Services (DGS) to reconsider the closure of the Laguna Hills Office. We request a meeting the week of September 3, 2024 to discuss the urgent feasibility of re-negotiating the lease in Laguna Hills or identifying other locations to accommodate the residents of South Orange County. Additionally, we wish to hear what communication and outreach initiatives the DMV will take to ensure the residents of southern Orange County know their options.**

The Laguna Hills Office is a vital state resource for South Orange County residents, particularly older adults, and its closure will cause significant challenges for this population and others that would be required to travel much farther to access in-person DMV services. In contrast, North and Central Orange County are served by DMV field offices in Costa Mesa, Fullerton, Santa Ana, Stanton and Westminster.

Here are important facts to consider about the impact of the Laguna Hills Office closure:

- The decision to close the Laguna Hills Office will leave only one DMV field office in all of South Orange County and will require all 855,000 South Orange County residents to shift to the much smaller 8,400 square-foot field office in San Clemente - 18 miles away with very limited parking.
- The Laguna Hills Office is located immediately adjacent to the City of Laguna Woods, a city where 81 percent of the population is age 65 and over – according to Orange County Office of Aging.
- Other South Orange County cities also have high percentages of older adults: Laguna Beach (22 percent), Newport Beach (21 percent), Dana Point (21 percent), Mission Viejo (18 percent) and San Juan Capistrano (17 percent).
- Orange County is home to nearly 3.2 million residents and home to 457,031 (14.3 percent) older adults, age 65 years and older. By the year 2045, the number of older adults is projected to increase to 17.3 percent.

- At age 70, all drivers are required to visit the DMV for a mandatory vision test. While the prospect of a pilot program to make this service available virtually through recent legislation AB 1606 is exciting, it is not yet available.
- As of March 2025, Real ID will be required for entering federal courts or flying on domestic airline flights. These Real IDs can only be obtained through in person visits to the DMV and are not available online.
- There are no guarantees that the other DMV field offices in Orange County, including the office in Santa Ana, Costa Mesa and San Clemente, will add capacity and appointments to serve the increased demand for DMV services.

In conversations with Value Rock Realty, the commercial property owner of Moulton Plaza where the Laguna Hills Office is located, they have indicated a strong desire to renew the lease with DMV.

While we support all the new initiatives to streamline online services, it is critically important we remember the DMV is an ESSENTIAL SERVICE, and one that our seniors and other populations need to access in person. For continuity of services and to minimize impacts on the residents, we request the DMV to maintain the Laguna Hills office until a new location nearby is available and, at minimum, conduct a robust outreach and informational initiative to affected residents to ensure online services are clearly understood.

We urge you to prioritize the constituents of southern Orange County and either re-negotiate the existing lease or consider alternative sites to offer essential services while concurrently informing residents of the DMV's services.

Respectfully,

Diane B. Dixon
State Assemblymember (AD-72)

Cottie Petrie-Norris
State Assemblymember (AD-73)

Laurie Davies
State Assemblymember (AD-74)

Catherine Blakespear
State Senator (SD-38)

Kate Sanchez
State Assemblymember (AD-71)

Janet Nguyen
State Senator (SD-36)

Sharon Quirk-Silva
State Assemblymember (AD-67)

Josh Newman
State Senator (SD-29)

Phillip Chen
State Assemblymember (AD-59)

Tom Umberg
State Senator (SD-34)

Tri Ta
State Assemblymember (AD-70)

CC:
Ana M Lasso, Director, California Department of General Services
Kerry Zadel, Senior Real Estate Officer, Departmnet of General Services