

2024 AVICC Resolution

Category: Community Safety

Title: Automated Licence Plate Recognition Funding

WHEREAS the City of Langford recognizes the importance of safety and compliance to the *Motor Vehicle Act* for all road users and;

WHEREAS the discontinuation of vehicle licence plate validation decals in British Columbia has negatively impacted law enforcement officers in their ability to detect and enforce uninsured motor vehicle violations:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the AVICC and UBCM petition to the Province and ICBC to provide municipalities and police agencies with the required funds to procure Automated Licence Plate Recognition (ALPR) hardware for all law enforcement vehicles in British Columbia.

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Introduction:

In 1970, the *Motor Vehicle Act (MVA)* required vehicle licence plate validation decals in British Columbia. The validation decals were issued through the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia (ICBC) and were to be displayed on vehicle license plates. The validation decals were often used by law enforcement officers to verify vehicle licence and insurance validity.

As of May 1, 2022, [validation decals are no longer required on vehicles in B.C.](#). The obsolescence of validation decals in B.C. was presented as a part of broader efforts to modernize ICBC and coincided with the introduction of convenient online renewal services through ICBC's website.

Following the elimination of validation decals, [police agencies in B.C. are raising concerns about an increase in uninsured motorists on the roads](#). While vehicle insurance remains the responsibility of individual motorists, public health care costs stemming from vehicle collisions involving uninsured motorists result in direct financial impacts for innocent, everyday British Columbians. Hence, to reduce potential health care costs and to encourage improved road safety outcomes, it is imperative that police agencies are equipped with the necessary enforcement tools to serve their respective communities.

Background:

On August 14, 2020, [Bill 20 – Motor Vehicle Amendment Act \(No.2\), 2020](#), received Royal Assent. The regulatory amendments in Sections 12 and 51 of the *MVA* provided ICBC with a mechanism to eliminate the necessity for a physical validation decal, through issue of a “prescribed document or prescribed action”.

Upon [initial debate of the amendments](#), enforcement concerns were raised. In response, it was noted that police agencies in B.C. use Automated Licence Plate Recognition (ALPR) technology to support law enforcement officers. [ALPR technology is an effective tool to help law enforcement identify MVA infractions and criminal activity that may otherwise go undetected](#). ALPR technology uses specialized software and infrared colour cameras that are mounted onto police vehicles to rapidly scan license plates against a “hot list” that is updated daily by the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) and ICBC.

As of May 1, 2022, B.C. joined the lead of five other Canadian Provinces and Territories in eliminating validation decal requirements. At that time, [ICBC contributed a one-time \\$1 million](#)

[dollar investment](#) towards modernizing the ALPR program and assisting municipalities and police agencies in purchasing new hardware.

Rationale:

The elimination of validation decals in B.C. has resulted in negative consequences impacting public compliance, law enforcement, and ultimately, road safety. Most significantly, while adequate vehicle insurance remains squarely the responsibility of individual motorists, the health and recovery costs stemming from collisions involving uninsured motorists are ultimately funded with tax dollars through ICBC's [Enhanced Care](#) and [Basic Underinsured Motorist Protection](#) (UMP). Thus, while efforts to advance the modernization ICBC should continue, they should be bolstered by proactive policy aimed at preventing uninsured collisions through further funding commitments towards the ALPR program.

Police agencies across the Province are raising concerns as a growing number of everyday British Columbians face the inconvenience of receiving a \$598 fine for driving without insurance. In January 2024, the [Coquitlam](#) and [Kootenay](#) RCMP detachments both reported striking increases in the number of vehicles they're stopping that don't have valid insurance and were explicit in linking the rise in uninsured vehicles to the elimination of the decal. Similarly, data collected through the Westshore RCMP Police Records Information Management Environment (PRIME) notes a significant increase in uninsured vehicle infractions with a total of 237 violation tickets and warnings issued between May 1st, 2022 – April 30th, 2023, up from 125 occurrences in the year prior.

[ALPR can aid law enforcement officers in their ability to automatically detect uninsured vehicles safely without distraction](#). While ALPR has been permanently in place since 2010, 14 years later, law enforcement vehicles across the Province remain underequipped with ALPR technology. While validation decals previously provided motorists with a friendly reminder of upcoming renewals, they more significantly granted law enforcement officers with a valuable, no cost tool to efficiently check vehicle licence validity. Thus, unless equipped with ALPR hardware, the elimination of validation decals has left law enforcement officers hindered in their ability to provide proactive, effective enforcement in their respective communities.

Safety for all road users is of paramount importance to B.C. residents and communities and it is imperative that the unintended consequences resulting from the elimination of validation decals be addressed without delay. Thus, to reduce potential health care costs and to encourage improved road safety outcomes in communities across B.C., the proposed resolution calls on the Province and ICBC to provide municipalities and police agencies with the required funds to procure Automated Licence Plate Recognition (ALPR) hardware for all law enforcement vehicles in British Columbia.