



COUNTY OF SONOMA

575 ADMINISTRATION
DRIVE, ROOM 102A
SANTA ROSA, CA 95403

SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 7/22/2025

To: Board of Supervisors

Department or Agency Name(s): Sheriff's Office

Staff Name and Phone Number: Colette Owens 565-3149 and Amy Talley 565-4664

Vote Requirement: Majority

Supervisory District(s): Countywide

Title:

DMV Fee Increase Pursuant to California Vehicle Code Section 9250.319 and Assembly Bill 2393

Recommended Action:

Adopt a Resolution authorizing an increase in the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) registration fee collected for all vehicles, used to fund Sonoma County's California Identification System (Cal-ID), pursuant to California Vehicle Code (VC) Section 9250.19 and Assembly Bill (AB) 2393, for vehicles registered in the County of Sonoma.

Executive Summary:

The Sheriff's Office utilizes fingerprint identification systems critical for law enforcement operations, including suspect identification and coordination with state and federal databases. Vehicle Code Section 9250.19 permits the collection of additional fees during vehicle registration to fund such systems. The Sheriff's Office recommends the current fees be increased from \$1 to \$2 for all vehicles and the Commercial Vehicle Registration Act (CVRA) Service fee from \$2 to \$4 (for a total of \$6 on all commercial vehicles). The proposed fee increase will provide a sustainable, dedicated funding source to enhance and modernize law enforcement identification technologies, including biometric systems. The revenue directly supports local implementation of critical public safety tools, including fingerprint-based identification, background checks, County registrants (ex: sex and arson registrants), and real-time crime-solving applications.

Discussion:

Vehicle Code Section 9250.19 authorizes the Board of Supervisors to increase the vehicle registration fees by \$1 for all vehicles and the Commercial Vehicle Registration Act (CVRA) Service fee by \$2 for a total of \$3 for commercial vehicles registered or renewed by Sonoma County residents. The Board of Supervisors approved this fee on June 2, 1998. The fees are required to be used exclusively for programs that enhance the capacity of local law enforcement to provide automated mobile and fixed location fingerprint identification. This system is used by all law enforcement agencies in Sonoma County and managed by the Sheriff's Office.

These assets include automated fingerprint identification and related systems that allow users to capture high quality fingerprints, access fingerprints from a local database, capture fingerprints in the field, and upload prints to State and Federal Dept. of Justice databases, as required by law. The system includes the following components: live scan fingerprint devices (Livescan), automated fingerprint identification archive (CAFIS), remote fingerprint input terminals, handheld fingerprint identification devices used by law enforcement in the field, and a booking system that maps booking photos to automated fingerprints. All these systems interact together with the various databases. The Fund is governed by a Remote Access Network Board (RAN Board),

defined in the discussion below.

RAN Board Members

The RAN Board is charged with regulating the use of Vehicle Code Section 9250.19 funds and making identification system recommendations to the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors for the competitive purchase and operation of equipment that is compatible with the Department of Justice's Cal-ID master plan and interfaces with the Criminal Justice Information Services, Electronic Fingerprint Transmission Specification, prepared by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Penal Code section 11112.4 (b) specifies that "each RAN Board shall be composed of seven members, as follows: a member of the board of supervisors, the sheriff, the district attorney, the chief of police of the Cal-ID member department having the largest number of sworn personnel within the county, a second chief selected by all other police chiefs within the county, a mayor elected by the city selection committee established pursuant to Section 50270 of the Government Code, and a member-at-large chosen by the other members." The current RAN Board membership is as follows: Sonoma County Sheriff-Coroner Eddie Engram; Chief John Cregan, Santa Rosa Police Department; Director Tim Mattos, Rohnert Park Department of Public Safety; Director Dan Fruchey, Sonoma County Information Systems; Carla Rodriguez, Sonoma County District Attorney; Mayor at Large Kevin McDonnell-City of Petaluma; and the Board's Criminal Justice Liaison, Supervisor David Rabbitt.

Basis for the Fee Increase:

The Cal-ID program provides essential biometric identification services such as fingerprint-based identity verification, criminal investigations support, and interagency data sharing. Under VC §9250.19, counties may impose a fee on vehicle registrations to fund these services. On January 1, 2015, AB 2393 increased the allowable fee amount (from \$1 to \$2 for all vehicles and the Commercial Vehicle Registration Act (CVRA) Service fee from \$2 to \$4 for a total of \$6 on all commercial vehicles), allowing counties to raise additional revenue to support the modernization and maintenance of these mission-critical systems, imposed in the same manner as the imposition of the initial fee. The RAN Board recommended the fee increase during the annual meeting held on May 1, 2025.

1. Ensuring Financial Sustainability of Critical Public Safety Technology

The existing vehicle registration fees collected under VC §9250.19 are deposited into a special fund used exclusively to operate and maintain the County's Cal-ID biometric identification systems. However, due to increasing operational demands, aging infrastructure, and the rising cost of technology, current revenue levels are no longer sufficient to maintain system functionality or plan for necessary upgrades.

The County faces a projected cost of \$2.5-\$3 million to replace end-of-life biometric hardware and software systems anticipated within the next two years. Without additional revenue from the proposed fee increase, the Cal-ID fund will be unable to cover these expenses, jeopardizing the continuity of essential public safety services.

2. Strengthening Identification Capabilities

The proposed fee increase will double the County's annual Cal-ID revenue, allowing for planned upgrades to key systems such as Automated Biometric Identification Systems (ABIS), Livescan devices, and Mobile ID technologies. These systems are essential to providing accurate and timely identification in a variety of public safety settings.

3. Keeping Pace with Technological Advancements

The County's existing systems are rapidly nearing the end of their supported lifecycle. Delayed replacement would result in:

- System downtime or failure (example; mandated booking system failure)
- Inability to maintain CJIS/FBI compliance
- Increased vulnerability to cybersecurity threats
- Higher future costs and logistical risks due to obsolete components

Timely upgrades are critical to maintaining law enforcement efficiency and protecting public safety.

4. Developing a Self-Sustaining, Dedicated Revenue Model

The proposed fee increase provides a consistent, predictable revenue stream dedicated to Cal-ID operations. This supports long-term planning, quicker procurement, and responsive service delivery without fiscal uncertainty.

5. Supporting Compliance and Operational Efficiency

This increase will also ensure the County continues to meet federal and state mandates concerning identity security while improving access, reliability, and coordination of identification services for both law enforcement and residents.

Projections

The Cal-ID fund is experiencing a declining fund balance due to flat revenues and increasing operating and maintenance costs. Current projections indicate the fund is decreasing at a rate of approximately \$250,000 annually, with no new revenue sources and no allocation for critical system replacements. The annual DMV revenue is approximately \$520,000 and baseline annual expenses are approximately \$800,000. Interest income fluctuates with the fund balance.

The current Cal-ID fund balance is approximately \$2.3 million. Without the proposed vehicle registration increase, the fund will be fully depleted during FY 27-28 after the estimated \$2.5-\$3 million in required system upgrades and end-of-life equipment replacements. Deferring these investments would risk operational failures in core public safety systems relied upon by law enforcement agencies countywide.

If the proposed fee increase is approved, fund projections show that the County will be able to move forward with the necessary system upgrades and replacements while maintaining solvency. With the increase in place and upgrades completed, the Cal-ID fund is expected to begin rebuilding by FY 28-29, reaching an estimated ending balance of approximately \$300,000. With the expected DMV revenue doubling with the fee increase, the fund would begin to grow at over \$200,000 annually, allowing funds to accumulate for future system upgrades and replacements.

As such, the Sheriff's Office recommends the current fees be increased by \$1 for all vehicles, for a new total of \$2; and for commercial vehicles, an increase of \$3, for a new total of \$6.

Conclusion

Approving this resolution enables the County to make full use of the authority granted by AB 2393, ensuring that biometric identification systems remain modern, reliable, and secure. The proposed fee increase will provide long-term financial stability to the Cal-ID program, directly support law enforcement and public safety, and prevent service disruptions due to technological obsolescence.

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Should the Board approve this action, staff will proceed with implementation with the DMV. It is expected the implementation would be complete, and fees increased, within 6 to 9 months of Board approval.

Strategic Plan:

N/A

Racial Equity:

Was this item identified as an opportunity to apply the Racial Equity Toolkit?

No

Prior Board Actions:

6/2/98 Board of Supervisors approval of vehicle registration fee increase pursuant to Vehicle Code Section 9250.19

1/7/14 Resolution approving the Sonoma County Auto Theft Task Force Vehicle License Registration Fee Increase

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY25-26 Adopted	FY26-27 Projected	FY27-28 Projected
Budgeted Expenses	\$605,000	\$1,060,000	\$1,040,000
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures	\$605,000	\$1,060,000	\$1,040,000
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other	\$605,000	\$1,060,000	\$1,040,000
Use of Fund Balance			
General Fund Contingencies			
Total Sources	\$605,000	\$1,060,000	\$1,040,000

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

The proposed action will not have any impact to the County General Fund. If approved, appropriations reflecting the fee increase will be included in the Sheriff's Office FY 26-27 Recommended Budget. The fee increase will not go into effect until mid-2026. The California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) requires a Board Resolution be submitted six to nine months prior to the fee increase implementation. The revenue is received by the County on a quarterly basis. The increased DMV registration fee will generate a 100% increase in dedicated Cal-ID revenue. Funds will be used to support equipment replacement, software upgrades, operational continuity, and ongoing system maintenance. This funding is essential for addressing the anticipated \$2.5-\$3 million in infrastructure upgrades required to maintain effective biometric services.

Staffing Impacts:

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Position Title (Payroll Classification)	Monthly Salary Range (A-I Step)	Additions (Number)	Deletions (Number)

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

N/A

Attachments:

Resolution to increase fee collected pursuant to CA Vehicle Code Section 9250.19

Related Items “On File” with the Clerk of the Board:

1/7/14 Board Item and Resolution for the Sonoma County Auto Theft Task Force Vehicle License Registration Fee Increase