



Consumer Federation of America

July 24, 2007

Honorable Alan B. Mollohan
Chairman
Subcommittee Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
Appropriations Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen
Ranking Member
Subcommittee Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
Appropriations Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Appropriation for NMVTIS in Department of Justice Budget for FY 2008

Markup: Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Subcommittee

Dear Chairman Mollohan and Ranking Member Frelinghuysen:

Consumer Federation and Consumers Union urge you to support an appropriation of \$3.5 million for Fiscal Year 2008, as requested by the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators, for continued expansion of the National Motor Vehicle Titling Information System (NMVTIS) at the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ).

NMVTIS is a national database system, originally established at DOJ under the Anti-Theft Act of 1996, which allows law enforcement agencies to track stolen and damaged vehicles across state lines, curbing vehicle thefts, "VIN cloning," frauds involving "salvage" vehicles, carjackings, and related crimes.

Currently, 30 states have some participation with NMVTIS, to greater or lesser degrees. Implementation of NMVTIS has been shown to reduce vehicle-related crimes in those states with greatest participation. However, with an additional appropriation of \$3.5 million, NMVTIS can be made more robust, effective and efficient. This increased appropriation is necessary to enable more states to share data, and to make the database an even more effective tool for reducing crimes involving stolen and damaged autos.

A 2001 Department of Justice cost/benefit study concluded that once fully implemented, NMVTIS could produce benefits of \$4-11.3 billion annually. A 2006

Integrated Justice Information System (IJIS) Institute report commissioned by DOJ concluded that "NMVTIS program provides an invaluable benefit to state DMVs and the public community as a whole."

Recently, the DOJ announced that it intends to issue long-awaited rules aimed at requiring insurers to submit data on totaled vehicles to the national database in a timely fashion, in fulfillment of the DOJ's mandate under the Anti-Car Theft Act of 1996. This is a significant step that promises to further enhance the value of NMVTIS for states, law enforcement agencies, and individual consumers.

Consumers have been injured or killed due to deceptively packaged unsafe rebuilt wrecks, which are often marketed to members of the Armed Forces, new immigrants, students, and other vulnerable populations. An improved and more robust NMVTIS will empower the public to protect themselves from these hidden hazards.

We believe that full implementation of NMVTIS is long overdue, and that the benefits to the American public, which have been well-documented by independent studies, far outweigh the costs.

Thank you for your consideration of our views.

Sincerely,



Rachel Weintraub
Consumer Federation of America



Sally Greenberg
Consumers Union

Cc:

The Honorable Patrick J. Kennedy
The Honorable Chaka Fattah
The Honorable C.A. Ruppertsberger
The Honorable Adam Schiff
The Honorable Michael M. Honda
The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
The Honorable David E. Price
The Honorable John A. Culberson
The Honorable Harold Rogers
The Honorable Tom Latham
The Honorable Robert B. Aderholt