

# Calif. license plates might go digital, show ads

June 21 2010, By ROBIN HINDERY , Associated Press Writer

---

(AP) -- As electronic highway billboards flashing neon advertisements become more prevalent, the next frontier in distracted driving is already approaching - ad-blaring license plates.

The California Legislature is considering a bill that would allow the state to begin researching the use of electronic license plates for vehicles. The move is intended as a moneymaker for a state facing a \$19 billion deficit.

The device would mimic a standard license plate when the vehicle is in motion but would switch to digital ads or other messages when it is stopped for more than four seconds, whether in traffic or at a red light. The license plate number would remain visible at all times in some section of the screen.

In emergencies, the plates could be used to broadcast Amber Alerts or traffic information.

The bill's author, Democratic Sen. Curren Price of Los Angeles, said California would be the first state to implement such technology if the state Department of Motor Vehicles ultimately recommends the widespread use of the plates. He said other states are exploring something similar.

Interested advertisers would contract directly with the DMV, thus opening a new revenue stream for the state, Price said.

"We're just trying to find creative ways of generating additional revenues," he said. "It's an exciting marriage of technology with need, and an opportunity to keep California in the forefront."

At least one company, San Francisco-based Smart Plate, is developing a digital electronic license plate but has not yet reached the production stage. The bill would authorize the DMV to work with Smart Plate or another company to explore the use and safety of electronic license plates.

The company's chief executive, M. Conrad Jordan, said he envisioned the license plates as not just another advertising venue, but as a way to display personalized messages - broadcasting the driver's allegiance to a sports team or an alma mater, for example.

"The idea is not to turn a motorist's vehicle into a mobile billboard, but rather to create a platform for motorists to show their support for existing good working organizations," he said.

©2010 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

Citation: Calif. license plates might go digital, show ads (2010, June 21) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2010-06-calif-plates-digital-ads.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--