

**TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT
RESPONSE TO SPECIALTY LICENSE PLATE QUESTIONS**

What benefits can you see for having a single web site for all SLPs?

A single website keeps the family of specialty license plates unified and maintains a single point of purchase for specialty license plates. This will help avoid additional consumer confusion about where and how to purchase a specialty license plate.

What benefits can you see for having an increase in marketing expenditures to raise the awareness of SLPs?

Increased visibility may result in increased sales of all specialty license plate designs, but only if the marketing is conducted taking into account the different pricing and cause-related benefits of existing non-profit SLPs.

What concerns do you have regarding a SLP marketing vendor?

- 1) Existing SLPs will likely receive less prominent exposure on the new website operated by My Plates, Inc (MPI)
- 2) New plate designs introduced by MPI could cannibalize sales of existing SLPs
- 3) On the website, MPI may be able to gather information about customers of existing SLPs which we will not have access to, and that MPI could use to encourage those customers to switch to their plates
- 4) Existing specialty license plates may not receive visibility in the new advertising done by MPI and, as a result, lose their share of voice in the specialty license plate category as they cannot compete with a marketing budget of millions of dollars
- 5) A possible loss of connection between SLPs and a philanthropic cause, which is an important decision factor motivating many of the current purchasers of non-profit plates.
- 6) Because the new specialty license plates will be more expensive than existing non-profit plates, this could create a misconception about the cost of the plates as a category, resulting in the loss of potential customers who are not willing to pay the higher cost of the new plates
- 7) Quality of customer service is not clear, and customer dissatisfaction could reflect negatively on existing SLP organizations
- 8) MPI will be conducting market research and reporting it to TxDOT, but is not required to share it with existing specialty license plate organizations, which puts us at a marketing disadvantage.

What actions might mitigate your concerns?

- 1) TPWD agrees with TCA's suggestion to have the existing (and lower costing) SLPs be prominently featured on the MPI home page in the form of a banner ad that rotates through the top 25 existing SLP designs, mentions the \$30 fee, and links directly to a complete listing of all existing SLPs.
- 2) TPWD would like MPI to include information about \$30 specialty license plates in all advertising. For example, all advertising could be tagged with a line that says, "Also choose from a wide variety \$30 specialty plates benefiting non-profit organizations across Texas." It is important to position existing plates in a way that maintains their connection to a philanthropic cause and emphasizes their lower pricing.
- 3) TPWD would like and have an opportunity to review all newly proposed plate designs. A committee made up of representatives from the major existing SLP organizations should determine if it directly competes with another existing non-profit plate, and if so, the plate should not be allowed to be produced.
- 4) TPWD agrees with the Texas Bicycle Coalition's suggestion to see an annual review process implemented involving representatives from existing SLP programs so that unintended negative consequences to existing SLP programs can be identified and remedied.
- 5) MPI should not be allowed to use information collected from their website about existing SLP customers to directly market their plates to such customers.
- 6) TPWD would like to be notified in advance of any changes to the MPI web site that would require us to redirect a link for our own web site.
- 7) TPWD would like to have input into scripts about our conservation license plates for use on MPI's 1-800 customer service number, and be able to give an alternative contact number that can be provided if all questions cannot be answered.
- 8) TPWD would like MPI and TxDOT to share any market research conducted by MPI regarding SLPs at the annual meeting with all existing SLP organizations.