



OFFICE OF THE
UTAH STATE AUDITOR

News Release

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**Office of the Utah State Auditor Releases An Inquiry and Analysis of
Vehicle Usage in the Office of the Attorney General**

Review of Business, Commute and Personal Use of State Vehicles

Salt Lake City, UTAH –

At the request of the Office of the Attorney General (AG Office), the Office of the Utah State Auditor conducted an inquiry and analysis of vehicle usage in the AG Office.

The AG Office currently utilizes 54 vehicles – 16 that are either pooled vehicles or assigned vehicles with no commute privileges, and 38 that are, or were, assigned to individuals with commute or personal use privileges. The audit team examined vehicle use with commute privileges of two classes of AG employees, 35 investigators, who are POST-certified law enforcement officers and two attorneys who are not investigators.

Key Observations and Conclusions – Investigators

The audit team reviewed relevant statutes as well as mileage logs and use of assigned vehicles among the 35 investigators. Among the investigators, there is a significant difference in private usage between the top and bottom “personal users”. The investigator with the best usage record used the vehicle an estimated 82% of the time for business use. At the other end of the spectrum, another investigator used an assigned vehicle for minimal business use, approximately 9% of the time. In addition, statute specifically authorizes the AG Office to provide vehicles for official and personal use to only 28 law enforcement officers, yet the previous administrations exceeded that limit.

Other concerns the audit team identified include the fact that the reimbursement rate for personal use of vehicles appears to be excessively low, the required call-out logs are not properly maintained, and commute vehicle trip logs also are inadequately maintained.

Key Observations and Conclusions – Non-Investigators

Two attorneys also had an assigned vehicle for commute use only. The audit team questioned the justification for commute privileges for these two attorneys, particularly given that they are not law enforcement officers, they lack statutory authority and other justifications were insufficient. In addition, the audit team expressed concern that the commute vehicle trip logs

were inadequate and additional questions exist regarding commute privilege tax reporting. Despite the former Chief Deputy's statements to the contrary, the audit team called into question his inadequate justification, lax record keeping and inconsistent reimbursement practices.

Mr. Dougall, Utah State Auditor said, "I welcome Attorney General Reyes' interest in greater efficiency and effectiveness in government. We have recommended to our new Attorney General that he should review vehicle usage policies in light of business needs and relevant statute, and that vehicle use privileges, including reporting and reimbursement policies, should be more strictly enforced. Of course, I encourage the Attorney General to review any use of state vehicles for personal or commute use to ensure it provides the best value to Utah taxpayers."

A copy of the inquiry and analysis can be found at <http://financialreports.utah.gov/saoreports/2014/AttorneyGeneralAssignedVehiclesPoliciesandPracticesAttorneyGeneral'sOffice.pdf>

About the Office of the Utah State Auditor

The Office of the Utah State Auditor provides Utah taxpayers and government officials with an independent assessment of financial operation, statutory compliance, and performance management for state and local government.

Specific activities of the Office include performing financial audits, conducting Federal funds compliance audits, providing local government oversight, conducting agency and program performance audits, performing fraud & compliance audits, and operating the State Auditor Hotline for citizens to report suspected financial issues or improprieties. These capabilities strengthen Utah State Government and help taxpayers have confidence in the integrity of Utah's government agencies.

The Utah State Auditor is a Constitutional Officer of the State of Utah, elected directly by the state's citizens every 4 years. The role of the Utah State Auditor is authorized in Article VII, Section 15 of the Utah Constitution. Additional Information at Auditor.Utah.gov

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