

Ing. Magnus Lincoln Quarshie FGhIE

P. O. Box BT 446, Tema – Ghana

Tel.: 0244265431 / 0302682417 / 0302631086

Email: mquarshie@delincl.com

June 1, 2017

Road Safety Fee for Vehicles from July?

I write in response to a news report published in the Daily Graphic newspaper on 29th May, 2017 and on your online portal www.citifmonline.com on the intention by the National Road Safety Commission to charge motorists, a mandatory Road Safety Fee when they take their vehicles to the DVLA for the renewal of their Road Worthy certificates.

According to the Head of Communications at the NRSC, Mr. Kwame Koduah Atuahene, *“Effective July 1 this year, vehicle owners will be required to pay a mandatory road safety fee each time they go to the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority (DVLA) to renew their road worthy certificate. This is meant to help promote safety by way of providing a reliable towing service such that when vehicles break down, the National Road Safety Commission (NRSC) can ensure that they are swiftly towed to help prevent crashes into stationary vehicles as well as help proven oil from leaking onto roads to destroy them”*.

As a Road Safety Campaigner, the idea to remove abandoned vehicles on our roads is indeed a laudable one. I am however, strongly against how this very good “idea” is to be implemented and wish to advise that the directive be suspended and thoroughly debated in order for it to achieve the desired results.

The report appears to suggest that this fund is being raised to support RSMCL intended service, having signed a contract with NRSC. This in my opinion is lawlessness. Is it a fee or a levy or a penalty? If it is a fee, then in my opinion it must be fee for a service.

Also, this “fee” raises a lot of questions as to why a state organization, will raise funds to support ‘a’ particular private business. To the best of my knowledge towing service is not a novelty in this country and there are a lot of towing companies operating in the country. How then does the state organization justify signing a contract with just one towing service provider for the whole of the country when there are equally competent towing companies around? How was the selection process conducted? And was it competitive?

How can a parastatal sign a contract with a private company and then impose fees on the general public to finance it? If another person walks in with emission monitoring equipment and manages to sign a contract with a parastatal, then another fee is imposed and on and on? This is not fair to the public.

Secondly, to suggest Ghanaians pay various sums of money ranging from **GH¢10.00 – GH¢200.00** is a total rip off in my opinion. What kind of financial model was used to arrive at these figures and what measures are we going to take in the event that the

state does not realize enough revenue to be able to pay off this private investor? Is it going to be charge on the state?

Thirdly, the assumption here by the framers of these mandatory fees is that, each vehicle will be towed. Again, we do have ECOWAS protocols and this decision by the framers; that all foreign vehicles entering our borders pay this fee, is a cause for concern. If for some reason, a vehicle owner will enter the country once a particular year, is he or she subjected to this fee? Even water, which is such a social good is fee for service and not an imposition.

The best practice as pertains in other jurisdictions has been that, a legislation is usually passed for vehicle owners to be registered with a tow garage usually through their insurance providers. All broken down vehicles which are not removed within stipulated time is then removed by the state and the owners surcharged. This approach ensures that the regulations on the removal of broken down vehicles are properly enforced by making the owner and the insurance companies directly responsible without undue burden on state agencies. This will also encourage Ghanaians to set up businesses for that purpose.

I call on the general public to reject this!

By:

Ing. Magnus Lincoln Quarshie FGhIE
Past President, Ghana Institution of Engineers (GhIE)