

Governor Jim Gibbons



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GOVERNOR FORMS AUTO THEFT AND INSURANCE FRAUD TASK FORCE

Carson City—Following a tour of the Vehicle Investigations Project for Enforcement and Recovery (VIPER) bait car program, Governor Jim Gibbons today announced the formation of a task force that will address fraud and auto theft in Nevada. The VIPER program, led by Lt. Robert Duvall, includes law enforcement representatives from the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, North Las Vegas Police Department, Henderson Police Department, the Nevada Highway Patrol, and receives assistance from the Nevada Transport Authority.

“Auto theft and insurance fraud function to create a virtual ‘crime tax’ on Nevada consumers,” Governor Gibbons stated. **“Theft and fraud combine to raise insurance costs by hundreds of dollars every year for each and every Nevadan. We need to find a way to reduce those crimes so we can all pay lower insurance costs.”**

The Auto Theft and Insurance Fraud Task Force will be charged with identifying the scope of the Nevada insurance fraud and vehicle theft problem and its affect on Nevada consumers as well as review potential solutions. The task force will take a statewide approach to ensure that all stakeholders are represented.

Last year, the Las Vegas Metropolitan Statistical Area was ranked as the number one city in the nation for vehicle theft, a number one rating that the Governor wants to see erased.

“In some cases, cars are being stolen just to get from one end of town to the other, and nearly one car per day is torched in Clark County. Insurance fraud is often at the root of these crimes, and other forms of insurance fraud are also costing all of us money. These are serious problems that put a strain on the pocketbooks of Nevada’s law-abiding citizens,” Governor Gibbons added. **“We need innovative solutions and ideas from a number of knowledgeable groups and individuals to find those creative solutions.”**

Gibbons noted that the bait car program is an excellent example of how different groups can work together to solve a problem and noted that he expects similar success from the task force. **“The ultimate goal of this task force is to develop a strategic plan to fight fraud and theft in the state.”**

The Governor indicated that the task force will investigate the issue of organized insurance fraud, vehicle theft and methods to combat these problems. **“By using the combined expertise of police departments, prosecutors, and insurance experts, we will find solutions that will greatly reduce theft and fraud in our state, which in turn will save Nevadans money.”**

Gibbons indicated that he will seek task force representatives from federal, state and county agencies; the insurance industry; and collision repair, medical and legal communities.

“Working together, this group can examine ways to unite the resources of the insurance industry with the appropriate components of federal, state and local criminal justice systems so that fraud and theft schemes are identified, thoroughly investigated and the perpetrators are prosecuted.”

Task force membership will be announced in the near future.

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Melissa Subbotin, Press Secretary

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