



- 4) Establishes a process to request a duplicate certificate of ownership to transfer a title when the required certificate of ownership is lost, stolen, damaged, or mutilated. (VEH 5752)

**This bill:**

- 1) Defines “title,” “certificate of title,” or “certificate of ownership” to mean an official record, whether in paper or electronic form, establishing and providing proof of legal ownership of a vehicle.

**COMMENTS:**

- 1) *Purpose of the bill.* According to the Author, “California has long led the nation in digital innovation, and our laws should reflect that leadership. Today, the vast majority of vehicle title transactions in the state already occur electronically, yet the Vehicle Code remains anchored in a paper-based framework that no longer reflects how business is actually conducted. The result is an unnecessary burden on dealers and consumers, who are forced to maintain costly, redundant paper workflows alongside the modern digital systems they rely on every day. AB 2719 fixes that with a straightforward update, clarifying that a vehicle title is equally valid whether in paper or electronic form. This modernization will streamline transactions, reduce fraud risk, eliminate duplicative administrative costs, and bring California's titling framework in line with the modern digital economy.”
- 2) *What’s a title?* A California Certificate of Title is an official document that identifies the legal owner of a vehicle and contains important vehicle identification information. Anytime a vehicle or vessel is bought, transferred, or sold the title needs to be transferred to the new owner. A title may include the registered owner’s name and address, vehicle identification number (VIN), make, model, year, odometer mileage, registration date, lienholder’s name and information (if there is money owed on the vehicle), and value.

Current title transactions are conducted by DMV electronically and with paper. DMV’s Electronic Lien and Titling (ELT) Program maintains lienholders’ title information in an electronic format instead of paper titles to reduce handling, storage and mailing costs. While lienholders can gain access to an electronic car title, non-lienholders cannot.

- 3) *This bill authorizes electronic titles.* DMV currently only issues paper registrations to title holders. This bill creates a new definition of title which includes an electronic form. It is intended to facilitate the issuance and

acceptance of digital titles, including processes for dealer or private party transactions. This change could potentially eliminate the need to submit paper titles to DMV for title transactions. Transitioning to electronic titles, or eTitles, may enable savings and efficiencies for the state, as well as for private businesses performing title transfer services.

Electronic titles may additionally reduce opportunities for fraud, such as title washing. Title washing is the practice of removing information from a car title by illegal or fraudulent means. Unscrupulous sellers "wash" a title to remove information that could reduce the value of a vehicle, including information about liens, or title brands, such as salvage titles and rebuilt titles. Title washing can even remove evidence that a vehicle was stolen. The result is a "clean title" that isn't really clean.

Shifting to online titling does not eliminate the risk of fraud, however. Some states with electronic titling services report fraudulent online activity, such as websites that claim to provide DMV services while stealing customers' personal identifying information.<sup>1</sup>

- 4) *Industry supporters seek shift away from paper titles.* Private industry representatives, such as car dealerships and DMV business partners, seek the efficiency of electronic titles. According to the California New Car Dealers Association, "[p]aper-dependent processes create delays in transactions that consumers expect to complete quickly. They increase administrative overhead and compliance risk for dealerships that must track and store physical documents alongside electronic records. They expose both dealers and consumers to the very real risks of lost, stolen, or forged paper titles, risks that electronic systems with strong authentication and audit trails are specifically designed to prevent."
- 5) *Private title transfers may change for Californians.* Only three states allow private-party online title transfers without an in-person or mail component: Arizona, Utah, Virginia. Most other states require paper conversion or in-person steps before a private sale can be completed. Under this bill, California could eventually become the fourth state to establish a process for online private party title transactions. Under current law, when a person purchases a vehicle from another private party, the vehicle's owner gives the paper title to the new owner. Both the seller and buyer must sign the original paper title. Then, the buyer must submit the signed title and forms to DMV (by mail or in-person) and pay a transfer fee. Once processed, DMV will mail the new title to the buyer, usually within 30 to 60 days.

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<sup>1</sup> [Motor Vehicle Fraud Alerts - DMV](#)

This bill opens the door to an online title transfer process for Californians—similar to other states, such as Arizona. Arizona’s eTitle Transfer system lets qualified sellers and buyers transfer vehicle ownership electronically through the state’s secure system. Both parties (buyer and seller) must make an account with the Arizona Department of Transportation Motor Vehicle Division (AZ MVD). They can then complete enhanced authentication, generate an eTitle Buyer Code to exchange, release ownership, and finalize the transfer completely online. The process is largely similar in Utah<sup>2</sup> and Virginia.<sup>3</sup>

- 6) *This bill may be unnecessary.* Current pending budget trailer bill language authorizes DMV to adopt regulations authorizing the issuance and acceptance of digital titles, including processes for dealers or private party transactions.<sup>4</sup> As such, this bill may be unnecessary.

**FISCAL EFFECT:** Appropriation: No    Fiscal Com.: Yes    Local: No

**POSITIONS:** (Communicated to the committee before noon on Wednesday, June 24, 2026.)

**SUPPORT:**

California New Car Dealers Association  
Vitu

**OPPOSITION:**

None received.

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<sup>2</sup> Utah Department of Motor Vehicles “Utah Person to Person Online Title Transfers,” <https://dmv.utah.gov/titles-overview/upp/>

<sup>3</sup> Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles “E-Titling Guide,” [dmv313.pdf](#)

<sup>4</sup> Budget Trailer Bill Language “Various Efficiencies,” [RN2615627 v4](#)