

## **Reminder to charter bus operators: Deadline for registration with International Registration Program (IRP) for extra-provincial travel is January 1, 2016**

Charter bus operators are reminded that as of Jan. 1, 2016, extra-provincial travel will no longer be allowed using their home jurisdiction registration plate. On and after that date, the bus must be registered under IRP (pro-rate plates) or purchase trip permits for each province or state of travel. As reported previously in *MCC News*, IRP is a vehicle registration agreement between all states in the U.S. (including District of Columbia) and provinces of Canada. It provides for payment of apportionable vehicle registration fees on the basis of total distance travelled in each province or state, similar in principle to the International Fuel Tax Agreement (IFTA).

For decades, charter bus operators have had the option of registering in IRP or opting to use the "charter bus exemption" that allowed charter buses to travel to or through most U.S. states and all provinces in Canada, except B.C., using their home registration plates. Scheduled line run operators didn't have an option and had to register line run buses under IRP.

Despite the bus industry's requests to keep the charter bus exemption, the states and provinces that make up IRP voted last summer to abolish it. It remains to be seen what the net effect IRP will have on vehicle registration fees paid by Canada's charter bus operators. There will be winners and losers depending on the operator's base jurisdiction and the extent of extra-provincial travel. Coach operators should contact their provincial vehicle registration office to initiate the application procedure — leaving it to the last moment could result in not having your pro-rate plates in time for Jan. 1, 2016 and you will need trip permits for any out-of-province travel.