§ 203. Additional duties of the commissioner. The commissioner of the office of general services is authorized, within amounts appropriated therefor by the legislature and subject to the written approval of the attorney general, to pay and cause to be satisfied and discharged claims for damage to personal or real property or for bodily injuries or wrongful death caused in connection with the operation of a motor vehicle (a) by officers or employees of the state, while acting within the scope of their employment, or (b) by other authorized persons providing service to state government while providing such service, or (c) with relation to motor vehicles which are assigned on a permanent basis with unrestricted use to state officers or employees, when caused by such officer or employee or by a person requested to operate such motor vehicle by such officer or employee in the course of or in connection with the use of such motor vehicle by such officer or employee. Such claims payments shall be made in accordance with a contract with a private firm to process, adjust, investigate, negotiate, settle, pay, and subrogate such claims on behalf of the state, as specified in such contract, provided that such firm is duly licensed to perform such services by the state department of financial services.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, any such contract may provide for the payment of benefits up to a maximum of fifty thousand dollars for any occurrence in accordance with article fifty-one of the insurance law and for such payments, not based on tort, the attorney general's approval shall not be required. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, any payment of other property damage or bodily injury or wrongful death claims caused by a tort of such officers, employees, or other authorized personnel shall not exceed a maximum of twenty-five thousand dollars for each claimant in accordance with such terms, conditions and requirements as shall be set forth in such contract. Any agency or unit of an agency which is supported by any funding source other than the general fund shall reimburse the general fund for all or any portion of such payments made pursuant to this section which are attributable to the other funding source.

Nothing contained in this section or in any contract provided for herein shall impair any right or obligation in connection with any

executed contract of insurance entered into by the state separate and apart from the authority granted herein. No moneys appropriated for the purposes of this section shall be available for expenditure from such appropriation until a certificate of approval has been issued by the director of the budget and copies of such certificate filed with the state comptroller, the chairman of the senate finance committee, and the chairman of the assembly ways and means committee.