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Support of HB1384

Dear Chairman Barve,

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1384 which will limit the mandatory hours a tow operator must be available in the instance that the owner of a towed vehicle wishes to reclaim the vehicle. Under current law, tow operators for private property owners must allow owners of towed vehicles an opportunity to reclaim their cars 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. However, the very same tow operators who tow for municipal governments and law enforcement can limit the hours in which a towed vehicle can be reclaimed. Typically those hours are 9am to 4pm. In all instances whether it is a private tow or government requested tow, the tow can occur whatever time of day the law is broken.

I work with over 25 tow operators in Prince George's County, all of whom are faced with dangerous and life threatening assaults routinely because of the current mandated law. What they can and will share with you during today's hearing is that there is a certain demographic of persons who show up to reclaim their cars during late evening and early morning hours. Typically, they are intoxicated. Typically, they are the unlawful element. The encounters are routinely confrontational and result in the police department being involved. In fact, my client RPM Towing, unfortunately had one of his driver's choked to death at 2am in October of 2019 by the owner of a vehicle that was being retrieved. While death is the ultimate loss, there are hundreds of documented incidents of assault, damage to the property of the tow operator and threats related to the safety and welfare of tow operators and their employees. Anecdotally, it reinforces the warning many of us received as young adults growing up; "get home before midnight, it's dangerous as it gets late" etc.

Essentially, this is a safety measure. No one should have to endure assaults or die simply because they are doing the release of a towed vehicle. The hours of reclamation under HB1384 are reasonable and I ask respectfully for a favorable report.

Sincerely,
Michael Arrington

