



CAROLYN A. QUATTROCKI
Chief Deputy Attorney General

LEONARD J. HOWIE III
Deputy Attorney General

CARRIE J. WILLIAMS
Deputy Attorney General

ZENITA WICKHAM HURLEY
Chief, Equity, Policy, and Engagement

STATE OF MARYLAND
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
CONSUMER PROTECTION DIVISION

ANTHONY G. BROWN
Attorney General

WILLIAM D. GRUHN
Division Chief

PETER V. BERNS
General Counsel

CHRISTIAN E. BARRERA
Chief Operating Officer

KAREN S. STRAUGHN
Assistant Attorney General

410-576-7942
kstraughn@oag.state.md.us
Fax: 410-576-7040

January 30, 2025

To: The Honorable Marc Korman
Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee

From: Karen S. Straughn
Consumer Protection Division

Re: House Bill 191 – Vehicle Laws – Towed, Removed or Abandoned Vehicles – Electronic
Notice to Owner (SUPPORT)

The Consumer Protection Division of the Office of the Attorney General submits the following written testimony in support of House Bill 191 submitted by Delegate Linda Foley. This bill would permit a tower and the police department to notify, by electronic notice, an owner, the insurer of record, and any secured party of the action taken against the vehicle.

When a vehicle is towed, the owner, if he is aware his vehicle is missing, is often left confused, believing that his vehicle may have been stolen. The law, as currently written, requires notice by certified mail within 7 days of the tow. When an individual believes his vehicle has been stolen, however, this is a lengthy period of time. This bill would permit electronic notification to the owner and the secured party as well as the insurer of record, which will likely result in a quicker ability for an individual to know what has occurred and take appropriate action. If no response is received within 7 days, then notice must still be sent by certified mail. This bill therefore adds protections, without removing any protections currently in the law in the event that electronic notice is not sufficient to notify the parties.

This bill will also help to potentially reduce storage charges imposed upon the owner. The Consumer Protection Division often receives complaints from individuals about the costs incurred in having their vehicle towed, including storage charges. By providing an option for more rapid notification, the owner can act to retrieve the vehicle sooner, resulting in smaller fines for consumers.

For these reasons, we ask that the Environment and Transportation Committee return a favorable report on this bill.

cc: The Honorable Linda Foley
Members, Environment & Transportation Committee