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Judicial Proceedings Committee  
Executive Nominations Committee

Senate Chair  
Joint Committee on  
Children, Youth, and Families

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony of Senator Mary-Dulany James**  
**In Support of Senate Bill 578 - Public Safety - Department of State Police -**  
**Police-Initiated Towing - Alterations**  
**Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee**  
**February 19, 2026**

Mr. Chairman, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

The Maryland Department of State Police (MDSP) currently sets maximum allowable rates for police-initiated medium- and heavy-duty towing and recovery. Senate Bill 578 will simply require MDSP to set the rates for light-duty towing and recovery as well.

I am also proposing a sponsor amendment with three specific aims. First, the sponsor amendment will set more concrete guidelines for light-duty towing and recovery rates by establishing that they cannot exceed 80% of the maximum rates for medium-duty towing and recovery. This will provide more clarity for approved towing companies and protect consumers from being charged unfair rates for light-duty tows.

Second, the sponsor amendment eliminates deadlines for establishing approved rates for medium- and heavy-duty towing, as that work has been accomplished, and acknowledges that the Committee on Rate Setting and Complaint Resolution for Medium-Duty and Heavy-Duty Towing and Recovery (“the Committee”) also has the responsibility to address light-duty towing.

The final component of the sponsor amendment adds additional responsibilities for the Committee.

The Maryland Insurance Administration has issued guidance to advise insurers that the at-fault vehicle’s insurance is responsible for covering the cost of

cleaning up cargo and debris after an accident. However, towing companies have faced challenges receiving payment and resolving insurance matters when the at-fault driver's insurance does not cover cleanup costs. They also face issues receiving payment when the vehicle is registered and insured out of state.

The sponsor amendment directs the Committee to examine and report on the two situations mentioned above and make recommendations to assist authorized towing companies in addressing them.

Stakeholders from the Towing and Recovery Professionals of Maryland, Maryland Transportation Authority Police, the State Highway Administration, and the Maryland Insurance Administration already serve on this committee, making it the ideal group to effectively develop solutions to these insurance issues.

In short, with the sponsor amendment, Senate Bill 578 will provide clarity to authorized towers, protect consumers, and require recommendations be provided so that towers are promptly paid, even in complex situations involving insufficient or out-of-state insurance.

Thank you for your consideration of Senate Bill 578 and I ask that the committee issue a favorable report with the sponsor amendment.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Mary-Dulany James". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Senator Mary-Dulany James

Harford County, Maryland