Department of Legislative Services

Maryland General Assembly
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Enrolled - Revised

House Bill 1100 (Delegate Pruski)
Economic Matters Finance

Telecommunications Infrastructure - Protections

This bill prohibits a person from recklessly or willfully and maliciously defacing, damaging, or destroying "telecommunications infrastructure." Violators are guilty of a misdemeanor and subject to imprisonment for up to six months and/or $500 fine. The bill expands the definition of "junk or scrap metal" used in provisions that address licensing, recordkeeping, and procedural requirements for junk dealers and scrap metal processors. The bill also prohibits a junk dealer or scrap metal processor from purchasing "telecommunications equipment" from an individual unless the individual, through specified documentation, can establish the necessary legal authority to conduct the transaction.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill is not expected to materially affect State operations or finances.

Local Effect: The bill is not expected to materially affect local government operations or finances.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Bill Summary:

Junk or Scrap Metal – Definition

The bill adds to the existing definition of "junk or scrap metal," telecommunications equipment that includes any other used articles owned by a "telecommunications company," as defined below, including antennae, burned wires, busbars, cell tower

batteries, fiber optic and copper cables, power inverters, materials with identifiable markers that indicate ownership by the telecommunications company, and small cell facilities.

"Telecommunications infrastructure" means items used to provide broadband internet, cable television, telephone, or other wireless communication services. It includes (1) antennae; (2) fiber optic and copper cables; (3) headends; (4) telephone poles; (5) radio transceivers; (6) radio towers; (7) wireless support structures; (8) small cell facilities; and (9) telecommunications company office facilities.

Damaging, Defacing, or Destroying Telecommunications Infrastructure

The bill prohibits a person from recklessly or willfully and maliciously defacing, damaging, or destroying telecommunications infrastructure. Violators are guilty of a misdemeanor and subject to imprisonment for up to six months and/or $500 fine.

This prohibition does not apply to (1) an employee of a telecommunications company or a person acting under the authority of a telecommunications company or (2) the supervision and control of a telecommunications company and the company's material, equipment, or facilities by a political subdivision within which the company is doing business.

"Telecommunications company" means a company that provides broadband internet, cable television, telephone, or other wireless communication services.

Junk or Scrap Metal Purchases – Seller's Legal Authority

A junk dealer or scrap metal processor may not purchase telecommunications equipment from an individual unless the individual, through specified documentation, can establish the necessary legal authority to conduct the transaction. This documentation includes a bill of sale, a receipt, a letter of authorization, or other documentary evidence showing that the seller has lawful authority to sell the telecommunications equipment.

Current Law: "Junk" or "scrap metal" includes nonferrous metal articles made wholly or substantially of specified materials (*e.g.*, light copper, heavy copper, aluminum, tin, and stainless steel) and specified used articles made of ferrous or nonferrous metals (*e.g.*, catalytic converters, hard-drawn copper, propane tanks, cell tower batteries, and used articles owned by a public utility). "Junk" or "scrap metal" does not include food or beverage cans.

In general, scrap metal processors and junk dealers must be licensed to operate in the State. For each of these professions, State law requires licensees to keep detailed records about junk or scrap metal purchases and specifies the circumstances under which these records must be submitted to a regulatory agency or a law enforcement officer.

For example, for each purchase of junk or scrap metal in the State, a junk dealer or scrap metal processor must keep a record in English that states (1) the date and time of purchase; (2) a description of the junk or scrap metal purchased; (3) the amount paid for the junk or scrap metal; (4) the registration plate number, make, and model of any vehicle used; (5) the name and address of the individual from whom the junk or scrap metal was acquired; (6) the signature of the individual from whom the junk or scrap metal was acquired and the person who accepted the material; and (7) personal identifying information of the individual from whom the junk or scrap metal was acquired. A junk dealer or scrap metal processor must submit a copy of the record to the appropriate primary law enforcement unit, by the end of the first business day following the date of the transaction.

A junk dealer or scrap metal processor is prohibited from purchasing a cemetery urn, grave marker, or any other item identified as "junk" or "scrap metal" unless, at the time of the purchase, the individual provides appropriate authorization from a relevant business or a unit of federal, State, or local government.

If a State or local law enforcement agency has reasonable cause to believe that junk or scrap metal that is in the possession of the vendor is stolen, the law enforcement agency may issue a written hold notice. A vendor is prohibited from removing items identified in the notice from their place of business for the duration of the hold period, which may not exceed 15 days.

A violation of these requirements is a misdemeanor punishable by a $500 maximum fine for a first offense and imprisonment for up to one year and/or a $5,000 maximum fine for a subsequent offense.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: SB 782 (Senator Jackson) - Finance.

Information Source(s): Harford and Montgomery counties; Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts); Office of the Public Defender; Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 25, 2026
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