



Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association, Inc.

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Hearing Date: February 10, 2022

Bill No. / Title: House Bill 487 – Commercial Vehicles – Nonconsensual Towing

Committee: House Environment and Transportation

Position: Support

The Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association (OOIDA) submits the following written testimony in support of HB 487, legislation that would establish basic consumer protections for truck drivers and motor carriers that are involved in a nonconsensual tow in Maryland.

OOIDA is a national trade association that represents roughly 150,000 small-business motor carriers and professional truck drivers, including nearly 1,700 who reside in Maryland. Our members regularly become victims of unscrupulous towing and recovery companies that continue to take advantage of the system, often times inflating their invoices by tens of thousands of dollars.

A nonconsensual tow includes those dispatched by the Maryland State Police (MSP) to assist with the recovery of a commercial motor vehicle. The problem is not with MSP, but rather with those companies that price gouge. In other words, there are no rules in place to prevent towing companies from charging whatever they want, which is a loophole they clearly use to their advantage.

As HB 487 is being considered, I want to make a few key points:

- (1) This is a national problem. It is not unique to Maryland;
- (2) The proposed rules in HB 487 should have little impact on towing and recovery companies that do things the right way. We have seen this in other states that have already addressed this issue; and
- (3) We are coming to the legislature as a last resort. Despite our best efforts, the towing and recovery industry has no interest in resolving our concerns in any meaningful way.

HB 487 would establish a complaint process, prohibit the use of per pound billing, clarify that towing companies have no right to a lien, and give truck drivers and motor carriers the option to use their tower of choice. These are consumer protections that are long overdue and we are

confident, if enacted, they would mitigate the damage being inflicted upon unsuspecting truck drivers and motor carriers by dishonest towing companies in Maryland.

Enclosed with this testimony is two examples of fraudulent and excessive invoices that our members are accustomed to in Maryland. As it stands now, there is simply no recourse which is precisely why HB 487 is so critically important.

Thank you for your time and support of HB 487. Please contact me directly at (816) 229-5791 ext. 1603 or mike_matousek@ooida.com should you have any questions or require additional information.