



February 10, 2022

Delegate Kumar P. Barve, Chair
House Environment and Transportation Committee
Room 251, House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: HB 487 – FAVORABLE – Commercial Vehicles – Nonconsensual Towing – Requirements

Dear Chair Barve and Members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee:

The Maryland Transportation Builders and Materials Association (“MTBMA”) has been and continues to serve as the voice for Maryland’s construction transportation industry since 1932. Our association is comprised of 200 members. MTBMA encourages, develops, and protects the prestige of the transportation construction and materials industry in Maryland by establishing and maintaining respected relationships with federal, state, and local public officials. We proactively work with regulatory agencies and governing bodies to represent the interests of the transportation industry and advocate for adequate state and federal funding for Maryland’s multimodal transportation system.

House Bill 487 would require the Maryland State Police to establish a schedule of approved towing rates for “nonconsensual tows,” in which a company is dispatched to tow a vehicle that has been involved in a collision, along with a comprehensive complaint and disciplinary process to handle allegations of violations. The bill would also give vehicle owners and operators the option to choose their own towing company in these circumstances, so long as the company in question can arrive on the scene and tow the vehicle safely and within a reasonable amount of time. Lastly, the bill would prohibit the use of per pound billing based on the registered weight of the vehicle and clarify that nonconsensual tows do not create any lien on the equipment, vehicle, or cargo being towed.

MTBMA supports HB 487 because it would increase consumer choice and improve transparency in the towing industry. Currently, neither the Maryland State Police nor the Transportation Article of the Maryland Code provide any consumer safeguards against abusive practices used by fraudulent towing companies engaged in nonconsensual towing. Nothing prevents these towers from charging excessive rates because the motor carrier has no ability to select the tower of its choice, and many then file illegal liens on the property to force drivers and operators to pay the inflated charges. This bill would standardize the nonconsensual towing practice and implement a process to address any grievances associated with it.

We appreciate you taking the time to address this important issue, and we urge a favorable report on House Bill 487.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael Sakata", is written over a faint, light blue circular watermark or stamp.

Michael Sakata
President and CEO
Maryland Transportation Builders and Materials Association