



BRANDON M. SCOTT
MAYOR

*Office of Government Relations
88 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401*

SB 599

March 2, 2023

TO: Members of the Judicial Proceeding Committee

FROM: Nina Themelis, Interim Director of Mayor's Office of Government Relations

RE: Senate Bill 599 – Vehicle Towing or Removal – Parking Lots – Maximum Fees

POSITION: Support

Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** Senate Bill (SB) 599.

SB 599 provides clarification to local jurisdictions regarding the fees that tow companies can charge for trespass towing. By removing language referencing “total fees” and amending to “fee”, SB 599 provides clearer guidance to local jurisdictions and tow companies on what fee rates can be authorized.

Based on the current iteration of the statute, the ability to double “total fees” has led to more ambiguity and less clarity for local governments, including Baltimore City. The ambiguity has at times resulted in fees submitted to the Baltimore City Trespass Tow Board in excess of the authorized doubling of municipal rates. Ultimately, the excessive fees can burden the citizens and visitors of Baltimore City, adding financial hardship in times of fiscal uncertainty.

We ask that you also take into consideration a recent formal opinion submitted by the Maryland Attorney General, specifically Opinion 107OAG093¹, which states that “total fees” allowed to be doubled should only be the towing fee and not include storage, administrative, or other miscellaneous fees. Passing SB 599 would effectively codify this opinion and help to clarify authorized trespass towing rates.

For these reasons, the BCA respectfully request a **favorable** report on SB 599.

¹ <https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/Opinions%20Documents/2022/107oag093.pdf>