



**Bill Title:** Senate Bill 599 -Vehicle Towing or Removal - Parking Lots - Maximum Fees.

**Committee:** Judicial Proceedings Committee

**Date:** March 2<sup>nd</sup> , 2023

**Position:** Unfavorable

This testimony is offered on behalf of the Maryland Multi-Housing Association (MMHA). MMHA is a professional trade association established in 1996, whose membership consists of owners and managers of more than 207,246 rental housing homes in more than 937 apartment communities. Our members house over 667,000 residents of the State of Maryland throughout the entire State of Maryland. MMHA membership also includes more than 216 associate members that supply goods and services to the multi-housing industry. More information is available at <https://www.mmhaonline.org/>

Senate Bill 599 alters the basis of determining the maximum fee amount a private tow company can charge for its services. This bill reduces from “twice the amount of the *total fees*” normally charged by a political subdivision to “twice the amount of the *fee*”, excluding administrative costs, storage fees, notice fees, and any other fees that are associated with trespass towing.

MMHA is concerned about the unintended consequence this legislation will have on housing providers. Non-consensual towing is crucial for property owners to keep their premise safe from those who trespass on their properties and to accommodate our residents in need. We are concerned that this reduction in fees collected by a tower could result in an increase in our fees which could lead to higher rents. We recognize the importance of the fee cap. However, with rising costs due to inflation, it is impractical for private towers to maintain their services without reallocating their costs.

By limiting the maximum fee towers can collect, private towers will have to recoup the cost of their services and this could result in increased costs to property owners. Property owners who through no fault of their own need a private towing operator to remove unauthorized vehicles. Property owners will be forced to pass these fees onto residents, increasing rent costs..

For these reasons, we respectfully request an unfavorable report on Senate Bill 599.

**For additional information, please contact Chinelo Osakwe at 954-681-8743**