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BILL NO.: **HB 871**

TITLE: Business Regulation – Catalytic Converters – Record-Keeping Requirements

SPONSOR: Delegate Jackson

COMMITTEE: Economic Matters Committee

POSITION: **Support**

DATE: February 28, 2024

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS** House Bill 871. The aim of this legislation is to reduce the number of catalytic converter thefts in Baltimore County. A catalytic converter is a required part of a vehicle's exhaust system. The converter removes harmful chemicals from the vehicle's exhaust emissions while running. These converters contain high-valued precious metals, which makes them attractive to thieves. With the use of a portable powered hand saw, a thief can remove a catalytic converter from underneath of a vehicle in the matter of seconds. The thief must then sell the converter to someone who can convert the part to retrieve the precious metals from inside. Baltimore County Police has determined the following number of catalytic converter thefts in Baltimore County:

2021- 424
2022- 724
2023- 508

The precious metals inside a converter can be re-sold. Palladium sells for \$1016.00 per ounce, Rhodium sells for \$4,675.00 per ounce, and Platinum resells for \$963.50 per ounce. A victim must pay between \$800 to \$1,200 to repair their exhaust and replace the catalytic converter, after the converter has been stolen from their vehicle.

Under the current law, scrap metal processors must report their acquisitions of catalytic converters, into a digital database share with Maryland law enforcement agencies. The current law does not require an automotive dismantler from reporting the purchase of a catalytic converter. This bill would require a dismantler to report, in the same fashion that exists for a scrap metal processor. The reporting of the vehicle identification number (VIN) is vital in order for law enforcement to determine if the part was stolen. The VIN will identify the actual owner and can be used to insure that the converter is not stolen.

This bill does not prohibit the purchase of a catalytic converter, it merely is a requirement of the seller to report the identifying information at the time of the purchase.

Accordingly, Baltimore County requests a **FAVORABLE** report on HB 871 from the House Economic Matters Committee. For more information, please contact Jenn Aiosa, Director of Government Affairs at jaiosa@baltimorecountymd.gov.