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**BILL NO.:**           **HB 871**

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

**SPONSOR:**         Delegate Jackson

**COMMITTEE:**      Finance

**POSITION:**        **SUPPORT with Amendment**

**DATE:**             March 26, 2024

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS with Amendments** House Bill 871. The aim of this legislation is to reduce the number of catalytic converter thefts in Maryland. 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 easily remove a catalytic converter from underneath a vehicle in a 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 and usually are 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- all of which are found in the catalytic converter. In addition, the cost to a victim runs 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 shared 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 ensure 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 their identifying information at the time of the purchase.

Baltimore County agrees with the amendment from the House, focusing the reporting requirements on detached catalytic converters received from individuals. This would effectively identify catalytic converters thieves and the victim, with the VIN being reported as required by HB 871.

Accordingly, Baltimore County requests a **FAVORABLE with Amendment** report on HB 871 from the Senate Finance Committee. For more information, please contact Jenn Aiosa, Director of Government Affairs at [jaiosa@baltimorecountymd.gov](mailto:jaiosa@baltimorecountymd.gov).