



Towing & Recovery Professionals of Maryland

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MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Will Smith, Chair and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Vince Flook, President, Towing & Recovery Professionals of Maryland
Will Cain, 1st Vice President, Towing & Recovery Professionals of Maryland

DATE: February 19, 2026

RE: **SB 577 Vehicle Laws – Towing of Vehicles from Parking Lots – Civil Action for Nonpayment**

POSITION: **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS**

The Towing & Recovery Professionals of Maryland (TRPM) SUPPORT SB 577 WITH AMENDMENTS. This bill will allow a vehicle owner to take possession of a towed vehicle without payment if a photo identification card is provided before taking possession. The bill also authorizes a storage facility to bring a civil action against an owner who retakes possession without payment and establishes a process for doing so.

TRPM appreciates the sponsor's intent to assist towing companies should a vehicle owner refuse to pay for the charges associated with a tow. However, the organization is concerned the bill explicitly allows in statute a vehicle owner to take possession of a vehicle "without payment".

SB 577 applies to private parking lot tows. These types of tows are pursuant to a contract between a lot owner and a towing company, and in some cases may involve a disgruntled vehicle owner who finds that his or her improperly parked vehicle has been towed without knowledge upon returning to the parking lot. State law, and many local ordinances, have established strict requirements for the towing of vehicles. These requirements include parking lot signage to inform vehicle owners of the possibility of being towed if parked improperly, and regulation of towing and storage charges. Being unhappy with your improperly parked car being towed does not negate the payment of these charges to the towing company for the services rendered on behalf of the parking lot owner.

TRPM is concerned that allowing a vehicle owner to take possession more broadly in state statute will set a precedent and the only recourse to ensure payment will be filing a civil action. This could be a time-consuming process and would mean towers are performing a service without payment for a period of time. No other industry works under these conditions. When a service is provided, payment is expected. At the very least, TRPM is proposing amendments to strike the words "WITHOUT PAYMENT" from page 2, line 23 and page 3, line 22. TRPM is willing to continue working with the sponsor and the Committee to address the issues raised by SB 577.

For these reasons, TRPM SUPPORTS SB 577 WITH AMENDMENTS.