

Chairman McColley, Vice Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the Transportation, Commerce and Workforce Committee, thank you for allowing me to testify on HB 172.

We are currently required to send 3 certified mailings to owners and lienholders of vehicles, which we have impounded from private property. Not only is the mailing a 2nd and 3rd letter unnecessary, it is both expensive and wasteful.

All other processes, that I am aware of, require one certified letter. A police impound requires one certified letter. The state of Ohio revokes a driver's license after sending one letter requesting proof of insurance. I believe the bank is only required to send one letter before foreclosing on a house. A person is only required to notify his/her spouse one time requesting a divorce.

If someone's car gets impounded, he/she knows the car is missing. If he/she wants to find the car, there is a sign on the property with a phone number and address of the towing company who towed the vehicle. Furthermore, within two hours, the towing company is required to notify the police department of the impound and the location where the vehicle was towed. If the vehicle is worth retrieving, the owner normally does immediately.

Should the owner fail to retrieve the car within 3 days, the towing company must submit a title request to the Ohio BMV for the owner and lienholder information. The towing company must then mail a certified letter to both the owner and lienholder. The current legislation (which HB172 will change) requires the towing company to send a 2nd letter, after the vehicle is impounded for 30 days, and a 3rd letter, after the vehicle is impounded for 45 days. If the owner or lienholder does not retrieve the impounded vehicle after receiving one letter stating he/she is being charged storage and will lose his/her vehicle if not retrieved within 60 days, almost never will the owner or lienholder retrieve the vehicle after receiving a 2nd or 3rd letter. Yet, due to the current law, the towing company must spend double and triple the amount necessary to notify owners and lienholders a 2nd and 3rd time that their vehicles have been impounded. This is both a waste of money and time. We are not only wasting money on postage, our staff is wasting numerous hours preparing and mailing these letters.

These vehicles are being impounded because the vehicle owners have not followed the rules of the property owner or leaseholder. The vehicles are parked without permission or left abandoned, with expired plates and in disrepair. These vehicle owners have a responsibility to properly dispose of their unwanted vehicles instead of dumping them on someone's private business or residential property.

House Bill 172 will help bring these costs and wasted hours back in line to where they should be. The towing company should not be overburdened by repetitively sending duplicate letters to the same person at the same address.