

My name is Jim Shriner, I am here representing The Towing & Recovery Association of Ohio, as well as my own company, Broad & James Towing.

I run Broad & James Towing, one of the hundreds of towing companies that belong to TRAO. Broad & James has been in business in Columbus for over 40 years, and employs approximately 40 people.

About 4 years ago, the Ohio BMV changed their interpretation of the Ohio Revised Code to exclude towing companies from filing for titles, utilizing the unclaimed motor vehicle affidavit. Towing companies had been using this process to file for unclaimed impounded vehicles for over 30 years.

SB 271 gave us back the opportunity to file for impounded vehicles using this process, but took away so much more, placing entirely too stringent regulations on all towing companies. For example, if you are unable to send a letter to the owner of an impounded vehicle within 5 business days, that is a major violation. It is not always possible to send that letter within 5 days, since you must obtain the owner's information from the Ohio BMV first. As absurd as it sounds, if a towing company fails to send notices out within 5 business days 3 times in one year, that towing company can lose its PUCO license and be closed for 6 months. Basically, this would permanently put the towing company out of business.

I speak from experience. I am already being sued by an attorney for sending out a letter in 8 days. When I explained the difficulties we encountered in getting the letter out in 5 days, he said the legislature said it must be out in 5 days and he is pursuing a class action law suit. I offered the car back to his client, at no charge, he said no, he will be taking us to court unless I pay \$25,000 to him and his client. We do not make enough profit to pay this kind of money. This is what we have to look forward to if HB 341 does not pass. Basically, I, and my 40 employees, will probably be without jobs.

Most towing companies are already refusing to tow vehicles from private property due to these new stringent regulations. This leaves property owners with little recourse as to what to do when people park vehicles on the property they own or where they are paying rent. Police departments do not have the manpower, nor do they want the responsibility of removing these vehicles. Their time should be better spent.

HB 341 makes many of these violations into minor violations for first offenses. They do add up for habitual offenders and some violations remain major violations, as they should.

The bill also gives us an opportunity to dispose of completely junk vehicles a little quicker. Many of our lots are overflowing due to the current stringent regulations.

HB 341 gives the PUCO the authority to raise private property towing and storage rates as the cost of living goes up. The rate has not increased in nearly 20 years. The bill does not give us an increase, but does give the PUCO the authority to do so in the future.

It is imperative to pass this bill as soon as possible, so that my business, as well as other towing businesses are able to continue doing business in the state of Ohio.

Thank You,

Jim Shriner