



Chair Abrams, Vice Chair Miller, Ranking Member Thomas, and members of the House Public Safety Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present opponent testimony on House Bill 210. My name is Jonithon LaCross, and I am an attorney at Porter Wright. I am testifying today on behalf of the Ohio Valley and Northern Ohio Chapters of the Recycled Materials Association (ReMA), representing over 115 member businesses across the state. These businesses process, broker, and consume a wide range of recyclable commodities including metal, paper, plastic, glass, electronics, and rubber. In Ohio, our industry supports more than 26,000 jobs and generates over \$6 billion in economic impact annually. We are proud to represent the original recyclers in Ohio.

Let me begin by expressing our sincere appreciation to Representatives Plummer and Roemer for their work in bringing attention to the issue of catalytic converter theft. We fully recognize the need to address this problem and eliminate the bad actors who facilitate the theft and illegal sale of converters. The industry shares your concern and remains committed to being part of the solution.

ReMA has been working closely with Senator Johnson and members of the Ohio Senate to craft a balanced, effective legislative response. That proposal includes provisions that:

- Reinforce current regulatory requirements.
- Enhance criminal penalties for individuals and businesses involved in illegal activity.
- Require that any person or entity purchasing individual catalytic converters be registered as a Scrap Metal Dealer; and
- Provide the Department of Public Safety and law enforcement with greater authority to investigate unlicensed and non-compliant businesses.

ReMA supports these types of initiatives, many of which are also present in HB 210. However, we must respectfully oppose the bill in its current form due to the inclusion of the special purchase item requirements, which impose excessive burdens on already-licensed, law-abiding scrap metal businesses. While there are only a small number of differences between the Senate version and the House version of this legislation, those differences are meaningful to our industry. We recently met with Representative Roemer to discuss those issues, and he indicated that he is open to working with us to resolve them. In light of that productive dialogue, we respectfully request that the Committee postpone further action or vote on HB 210 until those discussions can occur and consensus can be reached.

The scrap recycling industry is already one of the most heavily regulated sectors in Ohio. Licensed recyclers are required to collect and report significant transaction data to the Department of Public Safety—including the date and time of sale, the seller's identity, vehicle license information, and more. Photos and electronic scans of IDs are taken and uploaded, and information must be transmitted to DPS by noon the following day.

These regulations were put in place through collaboration with law enforcement and policymakers, including former legislation led by former Representative Bill Seitz. The result was a framework that successfully tracks transactions and aids law enforcement in identifying and prosecuting property thieves.

Since the enactment of these laws, our members have invested significantly in compliance—installing cameras, training staff, and modernizing systems. We have also gone

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further by reporting suspicious activity, alerting law enforcement and DPS to unlicensed operations, and encouraging state agencies to take enforcement actions where needed.

Unfortunately, the real problem remains largely unaddressed: the illegal buying and selling by unlicensed entities who ignore existing requirements and operate under the radar. These are the businesses that provide the path of least resistance for thieves. Additional regulations aimed at already-compliant businesses do nothing to disrupt these rogue actors and only create further compliance costs and disincentives for legitimate operators.

In closing, ReMA supports the vast majority of HB 210, particularly its focus on registration, penalties, and enforcement tools. But until the special purchase item provisions are removed, we cannot support the bill. We are committed to working with the House, this Committee, and the Senate to pass a balanced, business-friendly law that targets theft and supports enforcement—without overburdening compliant operators who are already part of the solution.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. I am happy to answer any questions.