

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

McHale Scrap Legislation Gains Momentum

Legislation Similar to Laws Passed in Baltimore City and Baltimore County

Annapolis, MD (March 16, 2010) – Baltimore City Delegate Brian McHale has introduced legislation that would require scrap metal dealers across the state to record all transactions and transfer that information electronically by the end of business on the day after the purchase to the local police department. McHale's legislation mirrors laws recently passed by both Baltimore City and Baltimore County. In addition to recording the sale, dealers would also have to hold specific items for three days to allow for police inspection of stolen goods.

According to law enforcement officials across the state, scrap metal theft has become a major threat to public safety, costing consumers and businesses thousands of dollars a year. Since 2003, overseas demand for scrap and valuable metals, such as aluminum, steel, bronze, lead, and copper has caused market prices for these metals to soar. Copper wiring at construction sites, bronze vases in cemeteries, a farm's aluminum irrigation pipes, high school bleachers and the catalytic converters on cars are all targets of criminals preying on our communities. As a result, the theft of these metals has dramatically risen around the globe. The State of Maryland is no exception. "From 2005 to 2008, metal thefts in Baltimore County increased by 500%," stated Baltimore County Police Chief Jim Johnson. "House Bill 1536 will provide a necessary tool for the Baltimore County Police department to investigate and arrest those responsible for the theft and conversion of scrap metal."

McHale's bill does not prohibit county or city governments from enacting more stringent legislation to control the sale of scrap. "This is a very important public safety initiative," said Delegate Brian McHale (D-46 Baltimore City). "Baltimore City and Baltimore County are to be congratulated for addressing this issue on a local level. The General Assembly should follow their lead and makes these provisions apply statewide."

"I applaud Delegate McHale's attempt to enact real regulation of scrap metal sales at the state level," stated Baltimore County Executive Jim Smith. "We worked very hard to protect the people of Baltimore County from this serious threat to public safety. I am particularly appreciative of the fact that this bill does not preempt the hard work already done by the city and county."

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