

March 3, 2023

Chair Scott Louser and Members of the Committee
Transportation Committee
North Dakota House of Representatives

RE: Senate Bill 2299 – Catalytic Converters

Dear Chair Louser and Members of the Committee

The National Insurance Crime Bureau (NICB) is a national, century-old, not-for-profit organization supported by approximately 1,200 property and casualty insurance companies, including many who write business in North Dakota. Working hand-in-hand with our member companies and North Dakota law enforcement, we help to detect, prevent, and deter insurance crimes, including vehicle and catalytic converter theft. While NICB provides value to our member companies, we also serve a significant public benefit by helping to stem the estimated billions of dollars in economic harm that insurance crime causes to individual policyholders across the country every year.

Catalytic converter theft has skyrocketed in recent years in part due to the significant rise in the price of various precious metals, including rhodium, platinum, and palladium. All are used in the construction of catalytic converters. Criminals are seizing the opportunity to profit off these increased prices by removing the catalytic converter from vehicles – in relatively easy fashion – and selling the stolen part on the black market. The component precious metals can be recycled into new products. Nationally, catalytic converter thefts more than quadrupled from 3,389 in 2019 to 14,433 in 2020. Thefts jumped dramatically yet again to over 52,000 in 2021, an increase of 1,215% since 2019.

Installing a replacement catalytic converter can cost thousands of dollars. Because thieves try to remove the converters as quickly as possible, their hastiness often causes higher repair costs due to incidental damage. Moreover, businesses with large vehicle fleets, such as vehicle dealerships or utility companies, are often targeted due to the number of potential marks in a small area. Thefts from commercial carriers can lead to replacement costs in excess of tens of thousands of dollars, and additional lost revenue due to halted operations.

Senate Bill 2299 seeks to curb catalytic converter thefts by adding metals contained within detached catalytic converters to the list of nonferrous metals and detached catalytic converters for which scrap metal businesses would be required to maintain sales records. Further, the bill requires a scrap metal dealer to register with the Attorney General, make business records involving transactions of detached catalytic converters available for inspection by law enforcement, and establish penalties for those who willfully fail to comply.

Accordingly, we respectfully request your support for SB 2299.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me at csepich@nicb.org or (847) 772-7667.

Sincerely,



Craig Sepich
Assistant Director
Office of Strategy, Policy, & Government Affairs
National Insurance Crime Bureau