



April 5, 2021

The Honorable Chairmen Diamond and Martin
Maine Committee on Transportation
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Dear Chairmen Diamond and Martin,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on LD 796, which is an act to restrict sales of catalytic converters removed from motor vehicles.

Since 1943, the Automotive Recyclers Association (ARA) has represented professional automotive recyclers, a vibrant and thriving part of the automotive supply chain. ARA's mission is to advance the automotive recycling industry and promote its beneficial effects on society. ARA and its members are dedicated to the efficient removal and re-utilization of ROE-Recycled Original Equipment® which are genuine original equipment manufacturer (OEM) automotive parts – and the safe disposal of inoperable motor vehicles. **ARA currently has four members facilities throughout the state of Maine.**

Our association greatly appreciates your concern and interest in combatting catalytic converter theft. As the price of the precious metals contained within catalytic converters has skyrocketed over the recent years, catalytic converters have become a primary target of thieves and organized crime. Many of our members have fallen prey to catalytic converter thieves both personally and in cases where they have purchased vehicles only to discover that the catalytic converters have been stolen. **However, as currently drafted, ARA has significant concerns with LD 796 due to the bill restricting automotive recyclers from selling legally owned catalytic converters that are removed from the motor vehicles they own.**

1) The Bill's Impact on Automotive Recyclers

Automotive recyclers rely on the ability to resell automotive parts for both repair purposes and for scrap metal. By restricting an automotive recycler from selling the catalytic converters they remove from the vehicles they own, not only will our 4 automotive recycler member businesses be deprived of a valuable source of income tied to the business model of an automotive recycler, but they will be stranded with hundreds if not thousands of detached catalytic converters that they are prohibited from selling. **By prohibiting legal owners of vehicles that contain catalytic converters from selling detached catalytic converters, LD 796 is interfering with legal forms of commerce and the businesses that rely upon the ability to sell these vehicle parts.**

2) The Bill Does Not Sufficiently Address Catalytic Converter Theft

Unfortunately, catalytic converters are not currently included within federal law requiring motor vehicle major theft parts to be marked with vehicle identification numbers, which allow law enforcement to identify stolen vehicle parts and also deter criminals from stealing cars and vehicle parts. It would be preferential for the federal government to speak on this issue but in the meantime states must play a proactive role in giving law enforcement the tools needed to investigate, identify, and arrest catalytic converter thieves.

ARA is currently serving on the International Association of Auto Theft Investigators' (IAATI) subcommittee on catalytic converter theft, which is working to craft model policy and legislation to give law enforcement the tools they need to combat catalytic converter theft. So far, the committee has produced 6 key points that are necessary for catalytic converter anti-theft legislation:

- 1) Identify the person selling the converter with certainty
- 2) Identify the donor vehicle with certainty (through marking)
- 3) Traceable payments
- 4) Transaction records accessible to law enforcement
- 5) What converters can be sold as repair parts determined by EPA and state regulators
- 6) Penalties need to strong enough to serve as a deterrent

ARA recommends that this committee adopt the International Association of Auto Theft Investigators' 6 points in their catalytic converter anti-theft legislation. Successful catalytic converter anti-theft legislation will not restrict the parties that can possess or sell catalytic converters but will give law enforcement the tools to confirm the identity of legitimate catalytic converters as well as identifying stolen catalytic converters.

Sincerely,

Sandy Blalock

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