



TOM UMBERG

SENATOR, 34TH SENATE DISTRICT

SB 55: Preventing Catalytic Converter Theft

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SUMMARY

Senate Bill 55 combats catalytic converter theft by requiring car dealers to apply the vehicle identification number (VIN) to the catalytic converter of each vehicle listed for sale.

THE PROBLEM

There are significant legal challenges to arresting and prosecuting catalytic converter thieves under current California law. Most major parts of vehicles sold in the United States are identified by an imprinted serial number relating to the unique Vehicle Identification Number (VIN); these parts include the engine block, transmission, frame, doors, and firewall. These identification markings allow law enforcement to establish that parts are stolen, even if the stolen vehicle has already been fully broken down. However, this identification process does not currently apply to catalytic converters. As a result, law enforcement may catch individuals in possession of dozens, or even hundreds, of suspect catalytic converters—but be unable to prove that any one of them was stolen.

SOLUTION

Senate Bill 55 will require car dealers to mark the catalytic converters of vehicles up for sale. The application of a VIN to a catalytic converter is usually done by etching, a process that is both easy and inexpensive. Requiring the marking of catalytic converters would be a tremendous help to law enforcement in their attempts to bring this significant theft issue under control.

SUPPORT

Los Angeles County District Attorney (Sponsor)
Northern CA Motor Club Insurance Company
Consumers for Auto Reliability and Safety
California District Attorneys Association
Crime Victims Alliance
Orange County Sheriff's Department
City of Alameda
Burbank Police Department

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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