

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
CITY COUNCIL

TO: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
FROM: LON PETERSON, CHIEF OF COMMUNICATIONS &
INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS
COMMUNICATIONS & INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS
OFFICE
SUBJECT: SUPPORT FOR SENATE BILL 55 (UMBERG)

AGENDA ACTION: RESOLUTION

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended by the Communications & Intergovernmental Relations Office that the Council, by resolution, support Senate Bill 55 (Umberg), which would require car dealers to apply the vehicle identification number (VIN) to the catalytic converter of each vehicle listed for sale.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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 control this significant theft issue.

BACKGROUND

The California State Senate Transportation Committee notes that during the COVID-19 pandemic the theft of catalytic converters rose dramatically in California as the parts were easy and “attractive targets for thieves.” In addition, as described in the committee analysis of the legislation, the National Insurance Crime Bureau the number of reported catalytic converter thefts nationwide has increased from 1,489 in 2018 to 64,701 in 2022.

On April 11, the State Senate Transportation Committee passed Senate Bill 55 unanimously in a 15-0 vote. The bill now awaits a hearing before the Senate Public Safety Committee.

In terms of local data, Santa Rosa residents reported the following catalytic converter thefts:

- 2020 -- 150
- 2021 --368
- 2022 -- 143

PRIOR CITY COUNCIL REVIEW

Not applicable.

ANALYSIS

The proposed bill would assist law enforcement in catching and identifying individuals in possession of dozens, or even hundreds, of suspect catalytic converters. Unfortunately, at the current time, law enforcement investigators often have challenges to prove that a catalytic converter was stolen. This bill would remedy the situation by requiring that car dealers apply the vehicle identification number (VIN) to the catalytic converter of each vehicle listed for sale.

As of April 17, the California Police Chiefs Association supports the legislation as well as seven cities.

On January 24, 2023, the Council adopted the 2023 state legislative platform. Senate Bill 55's proposed impacts are so specific and therefore are not covered by the platform. Per Council Policy 000-40 – Legislative Advocacy – if a policy matter is not covered by the adopted platform, then the Council would need to make a final determination to support or oppose a piece of legislation.

The Communications and Intergovernmental Relations Office coordinated with the Santa Rosa Police Department to analyze the legislation and make a recommendation to support the legislation.

FISCAL IMPACT

Not applicable.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

This action is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) and 15378 in that there is no possibility that the implementation of this action may have significant effects on the environment, and no further environmental review is required.

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Not applicable.

NOTIFICATION

Not applicable.

ATTACHMENTS

- Resolution
- Attachment 1 – Senate Bill 55 Fact Sheet
- Attachment 2 – State Senate Transportation Committee Analysis
- Attachment 3 – Text of Senate Bill 55

PRESENTER

Scott Alonso, Government Affairs Officer