

February 5, 2024

The Honorable Karrie Delaney and Members of the Committee
House Transportation Committee
Virginia House of Delegates

Dear Chair Delaney and Members of the Committee:

Our organizations respectfully submit this letter in support of House Bill 1073, an act relating to tow truck drivers and prohibited acts.

Automobile accidents remain a significant issue for policymakers across the country. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, road traffic crashes are the leading cause of death in the United States for people aged 1-54. Accidents often cause significant strain on victims. In addition to dealing with any serious injuries that may result, victims must often report to law enforcement and file insurance claims. Handling ongoing medical issues; managing follow-up appointments with either medical professionals, insurance carriers, or law enforcement agencies; and providing additional written material that may be required all pose significant burdens on victims as they deal with the after-effects of their misfortune.

This high-stress situation creates the perfect opportunity for unscrupulous towing companies to exploit accident victims. Some towers often take advantage of confusion at the accident scene or even after the fact by soliciting the victim and falsely claiming the tower was dispatched by an insurer or law enforcement agency. Our organizations have seen examples of towers charging accident victims exorbitant fees for a tow requiring only a few-miles – sometimes as high as \$10,000 for a single, routine tow. In some situations, the towing company will hold the vehicle hostage until the towing fee is paid, all the while racking up significant storage fees. Moreover, unscrupulous towers have been known to tack on vague fees such as “transfer,” “gate,” gasoline, or excessive administrative fees.

House Bill 1073 aims to protect vehicle owners from unscrupulous towers by prohibiting the solicitation of a person at the scene of an accident or disabled motor vehicle. This measure will help reduce the risk of entities engaging in predatory or fraudulent towing practices and inhibit the cascade of such practices following a successful solicitation, including exorbitant towing fees, the unwarranted use of specialized equipment, and holding vehicles hostage.

Accordingly, our organizations respectfully request your support for House Bill 1073.

We thank you for considering our views as you deliberate the merits of this bill.

Respectfully submitted,

