

**Delaware House of Representatives**

**Rep. Larry Mitchell**

**For Immediate Release:**

**March 22, 2022**

**House Passes Mitchell Bill to Increase Reporting**

**of Catalytic Converters**

*HB 296 would address dramatic spike in catalytic converter thefts during past few years*

DOVER – In an effort to combat the recent surge in catalytic converter thefts, the House of Representations passed a measure Tuesday aimed at identifying people who steal these devices due to the valuable metals they contain.

Sponsored by **House Majority Whip Larry Mitchell**, House Bill 296 would require scrap metal processors to report when they acquire catalytic converters. Currently, processors aren't required to record these purchases – only a few do it voluntarily – which makes it more difficult to track these thefts. The additional reporting would help law enforcement follow up on thefts of converters and resolve some of these matters more efficiently.

A catalytic converter is part of a car’s exhaust system that converts harmful engine-exhaust pollutants such as carbon monoxide into something less harmful to the environment through a chemical reaction. They contain three metals that aid in the chemical reaction that makes exhaust pollutants less harmful: platinum, palladium and rhodium.

“During the past couple years, we’ve seen a dramatic increase in the theft of catalytic converters off vehicles, which can leave car owners with a $2,000 repair bill,” said **Rep. Mitchell**, D-Elsmere. “The problem law enforcement has faced is that there’s very little tracking of these devices when they’re brought to a scrap metal processor, making it difficult to follow up on stolen catalytic converters. By adding this reporting, we will be making it easier for police to track and solve these thefts, and hopefully then dissuade people from stealing them in the first place.”

According to the Delaware State Police, Delaware law enforcement has seen a significant increase in catalytic converter thefts, from 17 in 2016 to 1,071 in 2021. According to moneymetals.com, the value of precious metals, specifically rhodium, has significantly increased, with rhodium spiking from $985 per ounce on March 22, 2017, to $18,700 per ounce this week.

“It’s unfortunate law-abiding Delawareans must continue to be on guard against thieves seeking to scavenge valuable scrap metal for a meager profit,” said **Sen. Bruce Ennis**, D-Smyrna. “While we work to address poverty, addiction and other underlying issues that lead to property crime, we can also take action today to make sure police are able to solve these thefts by tracking catalytic converters sold for scrap back to their original owners. I want to thank Rep. Mitchell for putting forward legislation that will help to hold thieves, and I look forward to passing this measure in the Senate.”

HB 296 heads to the Senate for consideration.

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