



TO: Chairwoman Kellie Warren and the Senate Committee on Judiciary
SUBJECT: Testimony in Support of HB2326
FROM: Detective Dustin Fussell, Wichita Police Department
DATE: 03/14/2023

Thank you for allowing the Wichita Police Department to offer testimony in support of HB 2326 which extends the sunset for the scrap metal database and further defines catalytic converters.

Catalytic converter theft has been and is a large problem in Wichita. In 2020, there were 541 reported thefts of converters. In 2021, they had risen to 1360 stolen converters. In 2022, there were 1123 converters reportedly taken in thefts. We continue to see enormous negative impact to the citizens whom we serve.

We have utilized the scrap metal database and we have seen success using that information to effectively investigate cases. On one occasion, we had an investigation where a large amount of copper wire was stolen from a large utility company that serves our community. Upon reviewing the scrap metal database, we were able to successfully resolve the case, identify the suspects, and return the stolen items back to the company. The data and photos gathered with the car description were invaluable during this investigation. In another investigation involving a stolen catalytic converter where the database was used, the only suspect information available was a Kansas license plate. A search of the database revealed two suspects and multiple transactions. After identification, the suspects were interviewed and were later charged with felony crimes.

Clarification that catalytic converters fall under the scrap metal database helps ensure that all persons receiving regulated scrap metal are recording this information in a consistent fashion. The extension of sunset for the scrap metal database will allow law enforcement to continue providing crime solving measures to better serve the victims of theft.

We are requesting an amendment to K.S.A. 50-6,111 subsection (d) by adding the following new provisions:

(22) any catalytic converter that has a defaced identification mark, owner applied paint or identification numbers, or which has been intentionally altered, by removing or obliterating the make, model, or manufacturer's number; and

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(23) any by-product or dust containing regulated scrap metals as defined in in K.S.A. 50-6,109 subsection (b)(2)(J), (b)(2)(K), or (b)(2)(L).

A large majority of converter thefts are crimes of opportunity. Marking or painting a converter is something a vehicle owner can do at very low cost that will deter this type of theft if there is a reduced opportunity to convert it to cash. This also provides an opportunity to the scrap industry to better evaluate catalytic converters presented for sale.

Catalytic converter dust is the leftover remnants of the decanting process. The precious metals contained inside a converter can be broken down into a dust form and combined with other converters to prevent the identification of the converter's origin.

By adding these amendments, it will make it more difficult for criminals and bad actors to steal catalytic converters and conceal their origin.

The Wichita Police Department supports House Bill 2326. We ask the committee to recommend the bill favorably for passage. Thank you for your time and consideration.



Proposed amendment to KSA 50-6.111 subsection (d):

(d) It shall be unlawful for any scrap metal dealer, or employee or agent of the dealer, to purchase any of the following items without obtaining proof that the seller is an employee, agent or person who is authorized to sell the item on behalf of the governmental entity; utility provider; railroad; cemetery; civic organization; manufacturing, industrial or other commercial vendor that generates or sells such items in the regular course of business; or scrap metal dealer:

- (1) Utility access cover;
- (2) street light poles or fixtures;
- (3) road or bridge guard rails;
- (4) highway or street sign;
- (5) water meter cover;
- (6) traffic directional or traffic control signs;
- (7) traffic light signals;
- (8) any metal marked with any form of the name or initials of a governmental entity;
- (9) property owned and marked by a telephone, cable, electric, water or other utility provider;
- (10) property owned and marked by a railroad;
- (11) funeral markers or vases;
- (12) historical markers;
- (13) bales of regulated metal;
- (14) beer kegs;
- (15) manhole covers;
- (16) fire hydrants or fire hydrant caps;
- (17) junk vehicles with missing or altered vehicle identification numbers;
- (18) real estate signs;
- (19) bleachers or risers, in whole or in part;
- (20) twisted pair copper telecommunications wiring of 25 pair or greater existing in 19, 22, 24 or 26 gauge; and
- (21) burnt wire;
- (22) any catalytic converter that has a defaced identification mark, owner applied paint or identification numbers, or which has been intentionally altered, by removing or obliterating the make, model, or manufacturer's number; and
- (23) any by-product or dust containing regulated scrap metals as defined in in K.S.A. 50-6,109 subsection (b)(2)(J), (b)(2)(K), or (b)(2)(L).