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Environment and Transportation
Committee

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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES

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I am Delegate Linda Foley, and I am presenting HB1002- Commercial Vehicles - Police-Initiated Towing – Alterations. For those of you who were here last year, this bill amends legislation passed by the General Assembly in 2022, which established requirements for police-initiated towing.

As part of an agreement last year, the chairs of the Environment and Transportation Committee and the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee charged a work group to develop a rate-setting and dispute resolution process for towing charges generated by police-initiated tows.

This bill represents a compromise among affected parties—the towing companies and the truckers. It reflects many months of negotiations on issues left unresolved by last year's bill. The 2022 bill expressly called for resolution of these issues by October 1, 2023.

Because the negotiation process was successful, this bill passed unanimously out of the House chamber. In addition, the cross-filed bill SB 927, which mirrors HB 1002, also passed the Senate floor on March 28.

What HB 1002 Entails

HB 1002 provides consumer protections for motor carriers and truck drivers involved in tows dispatched by the Maryland State Police (MSP) by establishing a Committee on Rate Setting and Complaint Resolution for Police-Initiated Towing. The Committee would be overseen by the Department of State Police. The Committee would be composed equally of trucking and towing industry representatives, as well as government agencies, to make recommendations on or before December 1, 2023, on maximum allowable rates for police-initiated tows, which must be approved by the MSP by January 1, 2024.

The bill also requires the Committee to review these rates every three years, recommend a process for resolving towing complaints and make any additional recommendations, as appropriate. Additional details on how the bill amends last year's legislation are contained in the testimony submitted by the affected parties.

Those delegates who were involved in last year's legislation know that the issues addressed by this bill are contentious and complicated. All parties involved believe the committee structure outlined in HB 1002 will provide a fair and reasonable process for establishing maximum rates, resolving disputes, and addressing matters of importance to the industry, with minimal involvement of the State Police.

I commend the parties affected by this bill for their willingness to work together to get to this point. I believe we have reached an agreement that represents good public policy with respect to police-initiated towing.

I ask for a favorable report. Thank you.