H-2013.1

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**HOUSE BILL 1815**

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**State of Washington 67th Legislature 2022 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Ryu, Boehnke, J. Johnson, Berry, Fitzgibbon, Orwall, Shewmake, Leavitt, Chase, Sells, Gregerson, Bateman, Fey, Goodman, Robertson, Macri, Ramos, Santos, Wylie, Simmons, Slatter, Bergquist, Tharinger, Valdez, Thai, Wicks, Pollet, Graham, Young, and Frame

AN ACT Relating to deterring catalytic converter theft; creating new sections; and providing expiration dates.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The legislature finds that rates of catalytic converter theft have rapidly increased statewide and nationwide, due in part to existing challenges with accurately identifying stolen catalytic converters. The legislature further finds that victims of catalytic converter theft often incur costs that far exceed the monetary value of the catalytic converters themselves. The legislature further finds that catalytic converter theft is a multifaceted issue that requires collaborative effort between law enforcement agencies, insurance companies, scrap metal dealers, and other involved parties to identify comprehensive solutions.

Therefore, the legislature intends to establish a pilot project to mark catalytic converters with unique, permanent identifiers, thereby enabling law enforcement agencies, insurance companies, and scrap metal dealers to more effectively track the ownership of catalytic converters and identify stolen property. The legislature further intends to gather and utilize data from the pilot project to inform additional efforts to address catalytic converter theft in Washington state. The legislature further intends to establish a task force with the goal of developing effective tools and methods for deterring catalytic converter theft, identifying and recovering stolen catalytic converters, and lowering costs to victims of catalytic converter theft.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) Subject to the availability of the amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the Washington state patrol shall establish the catalytic converter tracking pilot project. The purpose of the pilot project is to deter the theft of catalytic converters by marking them with vehicle identification numbers or other unique identifiers.

(2) The Washington state patrol shall administer the pilot project as provided in this subsection.

(a) The Washington state patrol shall collaborate with law enforcement agencies, insurance companies, and scrap metal dealers to identify vehicles that are most frequently targeted for catalytic converter theft and establish the most effective methods for marking catalytic converters.

(b) The Washington state patrol shall establish a procedure to mark the catalytic converters of vehicles most likely to be targeted for theft with unique identification numbers using labels, engraving, theft deterrence paint, or other methods that permanently mark the catalytic converter without damaging its function.

(3) Materials purchased under this pilot project may be distributed to dealers, automobile repair shops and service centers, law enforcement agencies, and community organizations to arrange for the marking of the catalytic converters of vehicles most likely to be targeted for theft at no cost to the vehicle owners. The Washington state patrol may prioritize distribution of materials to areas of Washington state experiencing the highest rates of catalytic converter theft.

(4) The Washington state patrol shall make any educational information resulting from the pilot project available to law enforcement agencies and scrap metal dealers and is encouraged to publicize the pilot project to the general public.

(5) The Washington state patrol shall provide a report on the pilot project to the governor and appropriate committees of the legislature by October 1, 2023. The report must describe the progress, results, and any findings of the pilot project, including the total number of catalytic converters marked under the pilot project, and, to the extent known, whether any catalytic converters marked under the pilot project were stolen and the outcome of any criminal investigation into the thefts.

(6) This section expires November 1, 2023.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) The Washington state catalytic converter theft task force is established.

(2) The task force is comprised of members as provided in this subsection.

(a) The president of the senate shall appoint one member to the task force from each of the two largest caucuses of the senate.

(b) The speaker of the house of representatives shall appoint one member to the task force from each of the two largest caucuses in the house of representatives.

(c) The president of the senate and the speaker of the house of representatives jointly shall appoint the following members:

(i) One member representing the Washington state patrol;

(ii) One member representing the Washington association of sheriffs and police chiefs;

(iii) One member representing the Washington association of prosecuting attorneys;

(iv) One member representing the office of public defense;

(v) One member representing the superior court judges' association;

(vi) One member representing the district and municipal court judges' association;

(vii) One member representing the association of Washington cities;

(viii) One member representing the office of the attorney general;

(ix) One member representing the property and casualty insurance industry;

(x) One member representing the scrap metal recycling industry;

(xi) One member representing the Washington organized retail crime association; and

(xii) Two members representing individuals with lived experience being charged with, or convicted of, organized theft.

(3) The legislative membership shall convene the initial meeting of the task force no later than September 1, 2022.

(4) The membership of the task force shall choose the task force's cochairs, which must include one legislator and one nonlegislative member.

(5) The task force shall review state laws related to theft of catalytic converters. The task force shall develop recommendations for the purpose of:

(a) Deterring the occurrence of catalytic converter theft;

(b) Developing tools to identify and recover stolen catalytic converters; and

(c) Lowering costs to victims of catalytic converter theft.

(6) The task force may develop recommendations related to:

(a) Maintenance and accessibility of law enforcement records related to transactions involving catalytic converters; and

(b) Traceability of payments related to transactions involving catalytic converters.

(7) The task force shall report its findings and recommendations to the governor and the appropriate committees of the legislature by October 1, 2023.

(8) The Washington state patrol shall administer and provide staff support and facilitation services to the task force. The Washington state patrol may, when deemed necessary by the task force, contract with one or more appropriate consultants to provide data analysis, research, and other services to the task force for the purposes provided in subsections (5) and (6) of this section.

(9) Legislative members of the task force shall be reimbursed for travel expenses in accordance with RCW 44.04.120. Nonlegislative members are not entitled to be reimbursed for travel expenses if they are elected officials or are participating on behalf of an employer, governmental entity, or other organization. Any reimbursement for other nonlegislative members is subject to chapter 43.03 RCW.

(10) This section expires November 1, 2023.

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