



Administrative Report

N.3., File # 22-3987

Meeting Date: 5/17/2022

To: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
From: JOE HOFFMAN, CHIEF OF POLICE

TITLE

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING A CHANGE TO THE MUNICIPAL CODE TO ESTABLISH AN ORDINANCE FOR THE UNLAWFUL POSSESSION OF CATALYTIC CONVERTERS

INTRODUCE BY TITLE ONLY ORDINANCE NO. 3230-22, AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF REDONDO BEACH, CALIFORNIA, ADDING MUNICIPAL CODE CHAPTER 15 TO TITLE 3 REGARDING THE UNLAWFUL POSSESSION OF CATALYTIC CONVERTERS. FOR INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Adoption of the proposed Ordinance would establish regulations prohibiting the unlawful possession of catalytic converters in the City of Redondo Beach. The theft of catalytic converters has been an on-going concern in the City for several years. There is currently no local, state, or federal legislation to define and punish the possession of detached catalytic converters absent an identifiable victim.

BACKGROUND

The City of Redondo Beach has experienced numerous catalytic converter thefts from automobiles over the past several years. Catalytic converter thefts contribute significantly to theft related crime statistics within the City and cost victims thousands of dollars in repairs.

Currently there is no local, state or federal legislation applicable within the City of Redondo Beach to prosecute catalytic converter thefts absent an identifiable victim. Nor is there law that allows for conviction for the recycling or sale of unlawfully obtained catalytic converters. Additionally, there is currently no local, state, or federal legislation applicable within the City of Redondo Beach requiring individuals to provide proof to law enforcement as to how a catalytic converter was obtained, thus limiting law enforcement's ability to prevent catalytic converter thefts and seize suspected stolen catalytic converters when no victim is present or able to be identified. The lack of laws on the subject has emboldened criminal enterprise. The adoption of this Ordinance would help improve the situation by making the possession of a detached catalytic converter illegal, in violation of the Redondo Beach Municipal Code.

Catalytic converter thefts are on the rise because individuals are incentivized to commit catalytic converter thefts for multiple reasons including:

- The ease and undetectable nature of committing the thefts in a matter of seconds using

common tools such as a cordless reciprocating saw.

- The ability to recycle catalytic converters at scrap metal yards for high dollar amounts.
- Legislation protecting criminals from prosecution unless the owner of a catalytic converter can be identified and located.

Catalytic converters are not serialized vehicle components so finding an owner is typically very difficult. Due to a lack of legislation defining and prosecuting these thefts when a victim cannot be identified, the vast majority of all catalytic converter theft cases in the City of Redondo Beach are unsolved or result in a lack of criminal charges being filed.

The City of Redondo Beach and the Redondo Beach Police Department would benefit from the creation of this ordinance for multiple reasons including:

- Creating a deterrent by establishing zero-tolerance for catalytic converter thefts.
- Sanctions for possessing stolen catalytic converters.
- Preventing criminals from profiting from the sale and recycling of stolen catalytic converters.
- Providing justice to the victims of catalytic converters whose cases would otherwise go unsolved.
- Reducing Part I crime statistics which have been negatively impacted by catalytic converter thefts.
- Minimizing the impact on City of Redondo Beach resources dedicated to deterring and investigating catalytic converter thefts.

Individuals who are in possession of stolen catalytic converters recycle them for substantial profit while victims of these thefts suffer tremendous consequences by paying thousands of dollars in repairs, loss of time, and a reduced perception of individual safety in the community.

This ordinance will provide the Redondo Beach Police Department a legal option to further protect the citizens of Redondo Beach and deter this criminal activity.

COORDINATION

The Police Department coordinated the development of this Ordinance with the City Attorney's Office.

FISCAL IMPACT

Funding for the staff associated with the implementation and enforcement of the Ordinance is available in the annual operating budgets of the Police Department and City Attorney's Office - Prosecution Division.

APPROVED BY:

Mike Witzansky, City Manager

ATTACHMENTS

Catalytic Converter Ordinance

Catalytic Converter Ordinance Presentation