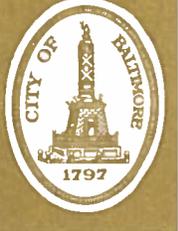


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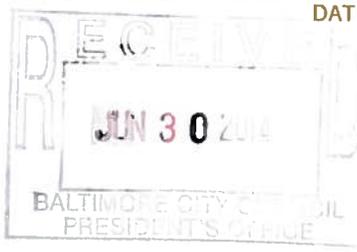
FROM	NAME & TITLE	Andrew Kleine, Chief
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	Bureau of Budget and Management Research Department of Finance (410-396-4941)
	SUBJECT	City Council Bill No. 14-0350 Public Towing Maximum Fee

CITY of
BALTIMORE
MEMO



TO

Honorable President and
Members of the City Council
C/O Karen Randle
Room 409, City Hall



DATE: June 30, 2014

This bill proposes to set maximum fees that can be charged for tows performed by an accident tow truck operator; for daily storage of vehicles that have been towed under certain circumstances; and for vehicles moved under certain circumstances.

Analysis

City Council Bill 14-0350 is for the purpose of setting maximum towing and daily storage fees imposed on the owners or operators of vehicles which are publicly towed.

Public tows are used by the City to remove vehicles, which are: obstructing traffic; illegally parked; abandoned; involved in an accident; or recovered as a stolen vehicle. Public tows are performed either by licensed towers and towing companies or through the use of City forces and vehicles. To be employed by the City, licensed towers and towing companies must apply for a license from the Police Commission and file a schedule that sets forth proposed charges for towing and for services incident to towing.

The Department of Transportation charges \$130 for vehicles towed East of Charles Street and \$140 for vehicles towed West of Charles Street. State Law prohibits towers from charging more than twice the rate used by the local jurisdiction (Md. Code §21-10A-04). Currently, the licensed towers and towing companies employed by City charge \$71 for regular tows and from \$ 25 to \$125 for additional services related to use of winches, blocks, and dollies as well as reimbursement for the provision of gasoline and additional mileage.

This Bill is more restrictive than State Law. It sets a maximum charge to the owner of vehicle at \$140. The maximum charge applies to both tows performed by licensed firms, employed by the City, as well as tows performed by the City's own forces and vehicles.

City Council Bill 14-0350 sets a maximum charge of \$50 per day for the storage of vehicles which have received a public tow. The maximum charge applies to licensed towers or towing companies employed by the City.

From a fiscal management perspective, the Finance Department recommends that the fee setting authority should reside with the Board of Estimates. This will allow fees to be kept current with towing costs.

UP

Fiscal Impact

City Council Bill 14-0350 has no fiscal impact on the City. The proposed maximum charge is equal to the amount that is currently being charged by the Department of Transportation.

Recommendation

The Finance Department opposes CC Bill 14-0350.

CC: Harry Black
William Voorhees
Angela Gibson