

Andrew Klein

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	SUBJECT	City Council Bill #09-0319

CITY of
BALTIMORE
MEMO



DATE: May 26, 2009

TO The Honorable President and
Members of the City Council
Room 400, City Hall

Attention: Ms. Karen Randle

City Council Bill 09-0319 is for the purpose of setting maximum towing, storage, and related charges that may be imposed on the owners or operators of impounded vehicles; establishing a period within which these charges may not be increased; correcting, clarifying, and conforming related provisions; and generally relating to impound towing.

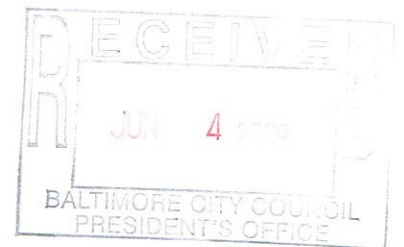
In order to enforce the City's parking regulations and scofflaw laws as they apply to motorists and their vehicles, the City, through the Department of Transportation and the Police department, utilizes a group of Medallion Towers to augment City resources in these efforts. This includes the towing of vehicles that are in violation of parking laws in identified tow zones, vehicles towed in response to police action, and vehicles that have been identified as scofflaws. The vehicles are towed to the Fallsway Impound Lot or to the Pulaski Highway Storage Facility where they are held until all fines and fees have been satisfied. Towing plays an important role in facilitating the free flow of traffic.

The Bill prohibits increases in the charges authorized by the 2009 towing rates agreement between the Mayor and City Council and the Baltimore Towers Association – for 5 years for towing and 3 years for storage.

Towing charges pass through the City and are paid to the Medallion Towers; changes in towing rates have no impact on the City budget. However, capping the fees would potentially restrict the City's ability to maintain effective towing capacity in the event of unanticipated circumstances, such as a spike in fuel prices, not to mention normal inflation, which could increase costs by upwards of 20% over a five year period.

The Finance Department opposes the passage of this bill.

CC: Edward J. Gallagher
Angela Gibson



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