



SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

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Bipartisan metal-theft legislation moves out of Senate Committee *Legislation will create considerable obstacles for drug-related crime*

SALEM – The Senate Judiciary Committee passed out legislation that strengthens deterrents and penalties to drug-related crime to the full Senate this morning. Senate Bill 570, sponsored by 89 legislators from both chambers, will create significant obstacles to persons who have long used the sale of stolen scrap metal to finance their drug habits.

“This is good legislation that will lead to a significant decline of metal theft in Oregon,” said Senator Floyd Prozanski (D-Eugene), chair of the committee. “This legislation has the support of nearly every legislator in the building, of business and prosecutors, and is exemplary of what we can achieve by working together on a common problem to meet the needs of Oregonians.”

Metal theft has become a serious safety problem across Oregon as thieves become more and more reckless in the materials they go after. In recent years metal has been stripped from school bleachers, utility electric substations, and guardrails.

“Metal thieves have been so bold as to steal a five foot statue of Sacajawea from a national park in my district,” said Senator Betsy Johnson (D-Scappoose). “Luckily, the metal purchaser who they tried to sell it to suspected foul play. This legislation sets the standard for other buyers who have every reason to suspect that metal has been taken illegally.”

Senate Bill 570 contains several main components that will end the ease with which metal thieves are able to trade stolen products for cash, including:

- Clarifying the duties of scrap metal businesses to notify law enforcement if they believe that the metal property they purchased or received is stolen.
- Requiring scrap metal businesses to collect and retain for one year a ‘metal property record’ from individuals and companies that engage in the selling of metal products.
- Creating misdemeanor crime for unlawfully altering metal property, for example obliterating a serial number.
- Requiring that payment for scrap metal is given no sooner than three business days after sale and delivered by a mailed check to the seller’s street address. This important provision will prevent metal thieves from using stolen identities to document their sale.

“Cracking down on metal theft and other meth-related crime is a key piece of the Senate Democrats’ agenda this session,” said Senate Majority Leader Richard Devlin (D-Tualatin). “I’m pleased to see broad bipartisan support for this issue. This is a meaningful and effective measure that will address a serious problem in many Oregon communities.”

The bill will now go to the full Senate for a vote.

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