



# SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

Oregon State Legislature  
State Capitol  
Salem, OR

## NEWS RELEASE

June 27, 2013

CONTACT: Tom Powers (503) 986-1074  
[tom.powers@state.or.us](mailto:tom.powers@state.or.us)

### **Bill gives cities and counties authority to regulate predatory towing**

*HB 3159C gives local governments the ability to set maximum rates and set up a complaint process*

SALEM—This morning the Oregon Senate voted to give more authority to cities and counties to regulate towing. House Bill 3159C, which passed on a vote of 26-4, allows local governments to set maximum towing rates and establish a complaint-driven process to solicit public input and feedback.

“This bill is for anyone who has felt that terrible sinking feeling of going out to the parking lot and finding their car missing,” said Senator Mark Hass (D-Beaverton). “Predator towing companies pay their employees on commission, which gives them a perverse incentive to tow as many cars as possible—sometimes illegally.”

Patrol towing generally involves an agreement between a property owner and tower to allow any unauthorized vehicle on the property to be towed without notice to the owner. To recover the car, the owner must track down the lot where the car was towed and pay outrageous fees to the towing company to recover it.

House Bill 3159C allows cities with a population of over 15,000 to regulate towing companies by requiring these companies to obtain an annual license and to establish caps on the amounts that towing companies can charge car owners to recover their vehicle. The bill also allows cities to set up a process to receive and respond to complaints from car owners regarding towing companies. Under HB 3159C, areas outside of these larger cities may also regulate towing companies, either through the jurisdiction of the county or the city.

“Towing companies charge obscene fees to people just trying to get their car back. A hook up fee, a gate fee, a storage fee, a parking brake fee—it’s outrageous and just plain wrong,” said Senator Jackie Dingfelder (D-Portland). “Drivers who make the simple mistake of parking in the wrong place shouldn’t have to pay a sizeable ransom just to recover their car. This bill gives car owners an avenue to seek justice if they’ve been the victim of predatory towing.”

In 2009, the Oregon Legislature voted to crack down on predatory towing practices by requiring a tower to take a photographic evidence of a parking violation and to contact a property owner or tenant before towing the car. The authority for local governments to regulate towing as provided in HB 3159C will provide car owners with additional protections against predatory towing.

“This bill addresses an important issue in my district by allowing cities like Medford and Ashland to set some ground rules for towing companies,” said Senator Alan Bates (D-Medford). “We have to give drivers more protections against having to pay hundreds of dollars to reclaim their own car.”

House Bill 3159C will now return to the Oregon House of Representatives for a concurrence motion.

###

*For more information on the Senate Majority Caucus, please visit [www.orsenatemajority.org](http://www.orsenatemajority.org)*