



*Monroe County Legislature*  
*Office of the Republican Majority*

July 12, 2021

To the Honorable  
Monroe County Legislature  
407 County Office Building  
Rochester, New York 14614

<b>OFFICIAL FILE COPY</b>
No. <u>210258</u>
Not to be removed from the Office of the Legislature Of Monroe County
Committee Assignment
<b>AGENDA/CHARTER</b> -L
<b>PUBLIC SAFETY</b>

**Subject: Enact a Local Law Entitled "Regulating Sale of Used Catalytic Converters"**

Honorable Legislators:

Throughout the past several weeks and months, there has been a noticeable increase in the theft and subsequent scrapping for cash profit of Catalytic Converters throughout Monroe County. These devices, found on almost any automobile, have increased in value dramatically due to the precious minerals contained within them. One mineral, rhodium was valued at \$14,500 per ounce by December of 2020, palladium is currently valued at \$2,336 per ounce, making these easily removable devices welcome targets for theft.

These devices are being stolen from personal vehicles sitting in driveways, businesses that maintain a fleet of trucks or vans, and even school districts where several were stolen from school busses. This is not just a local trend, across the country there is a dramatic increase in the thefts of these devices. Typically, these items are scrapped for a quick cash profit to fund drug addictions, drug distribution organizations and other criminal activity. This local law will address both the quick cash turnaround incentive for criminals trading in stolen catalytic converters and will require individuals and scrap yards to present and maintain records of the proper documents proving a scrapped catalytic converter came from a legally owned or traded in car and not acquired through a theft.

In order to scrap a catalytic converter, the individual trading in the item must provide documentation such as a vehicle registration, title, or bill of sale, as well as a copy of their valid government I.D., illustrating that the catalytic converter being scrapped came from a legally owned vehicle. Licensed automotive garages must also provide proof that a catalytic converter being scrapped came from a vehicle that was being serviced by their business. To aid law enforcement agencies in the investigations of stolen catalytic converters, scrap yards must maintain copies of these records for a minimum of 3 years, in the event a stolen catalytic converter was scrapped at their business and police need to follow up in the course of their investigation.

The main incentive for these thefts is the ability to make large sums of cash quickly. To address this, scrapyards will now be mandated to wait no fewer than 14 days to issue payment for a scrapped catalytic converter. By eliminating the quick cash incentive for this crime, as was done with high valued items in a similar law passed by this Honorable Body in 2013 pertaining to Pawn Shops, the prevalence of this type of theft is expected to decrease dramatically.

In addition to the new requirements for scrapping and cashing catalytic converters, the penalties for scrapping an illegally obtained catalytic converter will be increased. Under this new law, violators will be charged with a class A misdemeanor, receive a fine of no more than \$300 for the first offense, \$500 for the second offense, and \$1,000 for each subsequent offense.

This local law is an effective and prudent way to deter the theft and scrapping of illegally obtained catalytic converters. In order to repair and replace one of these devices, depending on the size of the vehicle, the cost can range from \$500 to \$2,000. Monroe County residents and businesses should not have to bear the costs of these thefts. Legislation similar to this proposed law has been passed in West Virginia, South Carolina, and numerous other locations throughout the United States and led to a lower number of catalytic converter thefts. It is our hope that this Honorable Body passes and the County Executive enacts this law expeditiously.


**The specific legislative actions required are:**

1. Schedule and hold a public hearing on the proposed local law.
2. Adopt the attached Local Law entitled, "Regulating Sale of Used Catalytic Converters" as written.

The legislative action requested in this referral is not an "Action," as that term is defined in 6 NYCRR § 617.2(b), and is not subject to review under the State Environmental Quality Review Act.

This action will have no impact on the revenues or expenditures of the current Monroe County budget.

Respectfully Submitted,

  
Paul Dondorfer  
Monroe County Legislator  
District 9

  
Karla F. Boyce  
Monroe County Legislator  
District 5

By Legislators \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

Intro No. \_\_\_\_

LOCAL LAW NO. \_\_\_\_ OF 2021

**ENACT A LOCAL LAW ENTITLED "REGULATING SALE OF USED CATALYTIC CONVERTERS"**

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE COUNTY OF MONROE, as follows:

Section 1. Part IV, General Local Laws of Monroe County, is hereby amended to add a new chapter to include the following Local Law:

**CHAPTER 385, REGULATING SALE OF USED CATALYTIC CONVERTERS**

**§ 385-1. Title.**

This Chapter shall be known as the law "Regulating Sale of Used Catalytic Converters."

**§ 385-2. Legislative Intent.**

- A. This Legislature hereby finds that the County of Monroe has experienced an increase in thefts of used catalytic converters from vehicles in our community and their resale to scrap metal recyclers.
- B. This Legislature finds that requiring scrap metal recyclers doing business in Monroe County to delay payments to sellers of used catalytic converters for at least 14 days after receipt will allow law enforcement additional time to investigate the theft of used catalytic converters and discourage criminal conduct.
- C. This Legislature also finds that requiring scrap metal recyclers to maintain records of the purchase of used catalytic converters will aid law enforcement in the investigation of thefts of such devices.

**§ 385-3. Purpose.**

The purpose of this Chapter to discourage the theft of catalytic converters from vehicles in Monroe County by requiring scrap metal recyclers doing business in Monroe County to delay payments to sellers of used catalytic converters for at least 14 days after receipt and requiring scrap metal recyclers to maintain records of the purchase of such devices for three years in order to aid law enforcement in the investigation of the theft of such devices.

**§ 385-4. Definitions.** As used in this section:

- A. "Catalytic Converter" means a catalytic converter or other equipment or feature constituting an operational element of a motor vehicle's air pollution control system or mechanism required by federal or state law or by any rules or regulations promulgated pursuant thereto, as amended from time to time.
- B. "Repair Shop" means a business enterprise that repairs vehicles and is certified by the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles.

- C. "Scrap Metal Recycler" means a vehicle dismantler, salvage pool, mobile car crusher, itinerant vehicle collector or scrap processor doing business in Monroe County; but shall not include a dealer registered pursuant to section four hundred fifteen of the New York Vehicle and Traffic Law, an insurance company, a governmental agency, a person in whose name a certificate of title, registration or other ownership document has been issued for the vehicle from which the Used Catalytic Converter was removed, or a Repair Shop.
- D. "Used Catalytic Converter" means a Catalytic Converter that was previously installed in a vehicle and which has been removed from such vehicle in whole or in part.

**§ 385-5. Prohibition.**

No Scrap Metal Recycler shall purchase or take possession of, including for purposes of recycling or rebuilding, a Used Catalytic Converter from any person or entity other than a dealer registered pursuant to section four hundred fifteen of the Vehicle and Traffic Law, an insurance company, a governmental agency, a person in whose name a certificate of title or other ownership document has been issued for the vehicle from which the catalytic converter was removed, a Repair Shop, or a person registered or certified or issued an identification number for the vehicle under the Vehicle and Traffic Law.

**§385-6. Maintenance of Records by Scrap Metal Recycler.**

- A. Each Scrap Metal Recycler who purchases or takes possession of, including for purposes of recycling or rebuilding, a Used Catalytic Converter shall record the purchase of the Used Catalytic Converter documenting the date of purchase, the name of seller, the seller's address or, in the case that the seller is an individual, the seller's residence address by street, number, city, village or town, the seller's driver's license number or information from a government issued photographic identification card, if any, or by such description as will reasonably locate the seller, or, if the seller is a Repair Shop, the Repair Shop's New York State Department of Motor Vehicles certification number. Such record shall be preserved by the Scrap Metal Recycler for a period of three years from the date of receipt of the Used Catalytic Converter. Such records shall be available for inspection by any law enforcement authority with jurisdiction over the Scrap Metal Recycler.
- B. Each Scrap Metal Recycler shall cause the record of purchase of the Used Catalytic Converter to be signed by the seller or his or her agent. It shall be unlawful for any seller or agent to refuse to furnish such information or to furnish incorrect or incomplete information. The Scrap Metal Recycler shall make and retain a copy of the government issued photographic identification card used to verify the identity of the person from whom the Used Catalytic Converter was purchased or obtained and shall retain the copy in a separate book, register or electronic archive for three years from the date of purchase. Such records shall be available for inspection by any law enforcement agency having jurisdiction over the Scrap Metal Recycler.

**§385-7. Payments.**

Payments by any Scrap Metal Recycler to a business, agency or private citizen who turns in a catalytic converter for scrap will be issued through check, with a copy of the check being held by the Scrap Metal Recycler for three years from the date of disbursement. Such records shall be available for inspection by any law enforcement agency having jurisdiction over the Scrap Metal Recycler.

§385-8. **Violations.**

- A. Any person that violates this Chapter shall: (i) be guilty of a class A misdemeanor; and (ii) upon conviction thereof, shall be punished by a fine not to exceed \$300 for the first offense, \$500 for the second offense, and \$1,000 for each subsequent offense.
- B. This Chapter shall be enforced by any local law enforcement agency having jurisdiction over the Scrap Metal Recycler.

§385-9. **Severability.**

If any clause, sentence, paragraph, section or chapter of this local law shall be adjudged by any court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, such determination shall not affect, impair or invalidate the remainder thereof, but shall be confined in its operation to the clause, sentence, paragraph, section or chapter thereof directly involved in the proceeding in which such adjudication shall have been rendered. This local law shall not supersede any applicable state or federal laws or regulations with regard to the subject matters set forth herein.

Section 2. This local law shall take effect upon filing with the Secretary of State pursuant to Section 27 of the New York State Municipal Home Rule Law.

Agenda/Charter Committee.  
File No. 21-\_\_\_\_.LL

ADOPTION: Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Vote: \_\_\_\_\_

ACTION BY THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_ VETOED: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

EFFECTIVE DATE OF LOCAL LAW: \_\_\_\_\_