


REPORT OF THE CHIEF LEGISLATIVE ANALYST

DATE: October 20, 2025

TO: Honorable Members of the Rules, Elections, and Intergovernmental Relations Committee

FROM: Sharon M. Tso 
Chief Legislative Analyst

Council File No.: 25-0002-S87
Assignment No.: 25-10-0887

SUBJECT: Resolution (Blumenfield - Lee) to SUPPORT S. 2238 (Klobuchar - Moreno) and H.R. 5221 (Baird).

CLA RECOMMENDATION: Adopt Resolution (Blumenfield - Lee) to include in the City's 2025-2026 Federal Legislative Program SUPPORT for S. 2238 (Klobuchar - Moreno) and H.R. 5221 (Baird), the Preventing Auto Recycling Theft Act, which would require that Vehicle Identification Numbers be etched on catalytic converters.

SUMMARY

On September 26, 2025, a Resolution (Blumenfield - Lee) was introduced in support of S. 2238 (Klobuchar - Moreno) and H.R. 5221 (Baird), the Preventing Auto Recycling Theft Act (PART), which would require that Vehicle Identification Numbers (VIN) be etched onto catalytic converters. The Resolution highlights that the theft of catalytic converters has become a pervasive and costly crime across the nation, impacting individuals, businesses, and the environment. In turn, the Resolution notes that the financial burden of replacing these converters, paired with the inconvenience of vehicle downtime, disproportionately affects lower-income communities and small businesses.

The Resolution adds that the absence of identifiable markings on catalytic converters makes it exceedingly difficult for law enforcement to trace stolen parts, and in turn, prosecute offenders and recover losses for affected victims. The Resolution, therefore, seeks an official position of the City of Los Angeles to support S. 2238 (Klobuchar - Moreno) and H.R. 5221 (Baird), the PART Act, which would require that Vehicle Identification Numbers be etched onto catalytic converters, thereby creating a deterrent for thieves and enhance the ability of law enforcement to identify stolen parts.

BACKGROUND

According to the Senate bill's author, catalytic converters are used to reduce the potency of toxic emissions from an internal combustion engine and are required for compliance with the Clean Air Act. Specifically, catalytic converters contain precious earth metals, including platinum, rhodium, and palladium, making some of them worth more than \$1,000 each on the black market; this, paired with the fact that they lack an identifying marker, has led to their widespread theft in the United States.

While metal recyclers pay between \$50 and \$250 for a catalytic converter and up to \$800 for one removed from a hybrid vehicle, replacing these converters impose significant financial costs to vehicle owners that can range between \$1,000 and \$3,500, and can even result in a total loss to the vehicle. Senator Klobuchar stated, “Throughout the country, we’ve seen an alarming increase in catalytic converter theft. These converters can be easily taken from unattended cars but are difficult and expensive for car owners to replace. By making catalytic converter theft a criminal offense and ensuring each converter can be easily tracked, our legislation would provide law enforcement officers with the tools and resources they need to crack down on these crimes.”

The PART Act would amend Sections 541.5 and 543 of Title 49, Code of Federal Regulations and mandate the following: 1) all new vehicles would have a VIN stamped onto the converter to allow law enforcement officers to trace stolen parts back to the vehicle from which they originate; 2) the creation of a grant program through which entities can stamp identification numbers onto catalytic converters of existing vehicles; 3) implementation of record-keeping standards for purchasers of used catalytic converters; and 4) the establishment of federal criminal penalties for catalytic converter theft by codifying these crimes as a criminal offense.

The City of Los Angeles has previously supported analogous legislature, including SB 55 (Umberg), which established a requirement that both new or used vehicles sold in California have the VIN etched on catalytic converters, AB 1740 (Muratsuchi), AB 2407 (O’Donnell), and SB 1087 (Gonzalez), all which sought to strengthen the laws governing the sale of used catalytic converters.

According to the National Insurance Crime Bureau, the latest statistics show a 68% decrease in catalytic converter theft from 2023 to 2024, which may be attributable to market shifts tied to precious metals, strengthened state legislation, increased enforcement efforts, and improved public awareness. Recognizing the prevalent nationwide issue of catalytic converter theft, S. 2238 (Klobuchar - Moreno) and H.R. 5221 (Baird), the PART Act, would require identification numbers to be etched on catalytic converters, thereby creating a federal framework to support state measures taken toward the prevention, tracking, and prosecution of related thefts.

BILL STATUS

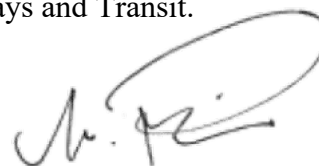
S. 2238

07/10/2025 Introduced in the Senate and read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

H.R. 5221

09/09/2025 Introduced in House.

09/10/2025 Referred to the Subcommittee on Highways and Transit.



Monét A. Padilla
Analyst

Attachment: Resolution (Blumenfield - Lee)

RESOLUTION
"Preventing Auto Recycling Theft Act"

WHEREAS, any official position of the City of Los Angeles with respect to legislation, rules, regulations or policies proposed to or pending before a local, state or federal governmental body or agency must have first been adopted in the form of a Resolution by the City Council with the concurrence of the Mayor; and

WHEREAS, the theft of catalytic converters has become a pervasive and costly crime across the nation, impacting individuals, businesses, and the environment; and

WHEREAS, the absence of identifiable markings on catalytic converters makes it exceedingly difficult for law enforcement to trace stolen parts, prosecute offenders, and recover losses for victims; and

WHEREAS, the financial burden of replacing stolen catalytic converters, coupled with the inconvenience of vehicle downtime, disproportionately affects lower-income communities and small businesses; and

WHEREAS, the secondary market for stolen catalytic converters, fueled by their high scrap value, incentivizes these criminal activities; and

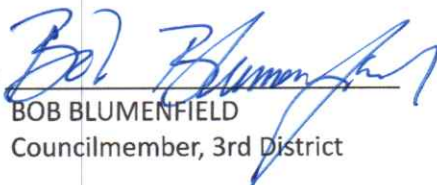
WHEREAS, S. 2238 and H.R. 5221, legislation in the United States Senate and House of Representatives known as the "Preventing Auto Recycling Theft Act" proposes a common-sense and effective solution by requiring the vehicle identification number (VIN) to be etched on catalytic converters; and

WHEREAS, the implementation of VIN stamping would create a clear deterrent for thieves, enhance the ability of law enforcement to identify stolen parts, and provide a critical tool for dismantling organized theft rings; and

WHEREAS, the City of Los Angeles previously supported SB 55 (Umberg), which established a requirement that vehicles sold in California have the VIN etched on catalytic converters, but a federal requirement would be more effective given the number of out-of-state vehicles in California;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, with concurrence of the Mayor, that by adoption of this Resolution, the City of Los Angeles hereby includes in its 2025-26 Federal Legislative Program SUPPORT for S. 2238 and H.R. 5221, the Preventing Auto Recycling Theft Act, which would require that Vehicle Identification Numbers be etched on catalytic converters.

PRESENTED BY:


BOB BLUMENFELD
Councilmember, 3rd District

SECONDED BY:



ORIGINAL


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