

---

**Transportation Committee**

---

**HB 1962**

**Brief Description:** Compensating auto theft victims for towing and impound fees.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Sells, McCoy, Lovick, Strow, Bailey, O'Brien, Kristiansen, Roberts, B. Sullivan, Pearson, Dunshee, Ericks, Chase, Kagi, Conway, McCune and Hurst.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Creates a program within the Department of Licensing to provide compensation for the costs incurred for the towing and storage of a stolen vehicle.

**Hearing Date:** 2/21/07

**Staff:** David Munnecke (786-7315).

**Background:**

A police officer is allowed by statute to take custody of a motor vehicle and have it impounded under the following circumstances:

- if the vehicle's driver is arrested for certain offenses or taken into custody;
- when the officer finds the vehicle unattended upon a highway where the vehicle is an obstruction to traffic or jeopardizes public safety;
- when the vehicle is stolen;
- when the vehicle is illegally parked; and
- upon a determination that a person is operating the vehicle without a valid driver's license.

Once a vehicle is impounded, the impounding tow truck operator is required to notify the legal and registered owners of the vehicle. This notice must be sent by first-class mail within 24 hours of impoundment and must inform the owner of the identity of the person or agency authorizing the impound. The notification must also include the name of the impounding tow firm, its address, and telephone number.

Before an impounded vehicle can be released to the legal owner, registered owner, or other authorized individual, the applicable storage, towing, and other associated costs must be paid to the person holding custody of the vehicle.

---

*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

**Summary of Bill:**

If the registered owner of a stolen motor vehicle has filed a vehicle theft report, the owner may apply to the Department of Licensing for compensation for costs incurred for the towing and storage of the vehicle.

The funds to provide compensation to the owners of stolen vehicles are provided by imposing a \$100 fee on every sentence for theft, where the property stolen is a motor vehicle, and every sentence for taking a motor vehicle without permission.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect on January 1, 2008.