

Transportation Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No: HB-5465 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)

Title: AN ACT CONCERNING THE TOWING AND STORAGE OF MOTOR VEHICLES.

Vote Date: 3/16/2026

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 3/9/2026

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Transportation Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

To bill implements recommendations from DMV working groups, the police-ordered towing council, as well as concerns from consumer advocates.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE (IF APPLICABLE):

The substitute language modifies the towed vehicle portal provision by extending the timeframe for posting to the portal in an attempt to streamline interaction between towing companies and the DMV and lays out a more defined procedure of when a towing company can begin to charge, who they need to report a tow to, and in what time frame, and attempts to make filing and reporting certain documents easier. It also further specifies what information must be included in the towing bill mailed with a notice of tow and removes a provision allowing vehicle owners to match a scrap offer. The substitute language further dissolves now unnecessary working groups and adds requirements for the advisory council to evaluate certain issues.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Garrett Eucalitto, Commissioner, Department of Transportation

Section 8 would require wrecker services participating in municipal towing rotations and their employees to complete Traffic Incident Management (TIM) training offered by CTDOT within one year of hire. CTDOT supports this requirement, noting it worked with stakeholders through the Police-Ordered Towing Council to improve towing operations. The department believes expanding TIM training will enhance safety at crash scenes, improve coordination between tow

operators and emergency responders, and speed up roadway clearance. These improvements are expected to help maintain safer and more efficient highways across Connecticut.

Tony Guerrero, Commissioner, Department of Motor Vehicles

HB 5465 builds on Public Act 25-55 and incorporates recommendations from a DMV-led stakeholder working group examining non-consensual towing and unclaimed vehicles. Key proposals include: creating an online “Find Your Vehicle” portal to help owners locate towed vehicles and learn about auctions; removing the requirement that towers estimate a vehicle’s value during the abandonment process; establishing a uniform 30-day period before unclaimed vehicles go to auction, with owners allowed to match the final scrap offer; forming an ongoing stakeholder working group to review the system; and requiring clearer notices to vehicle owners, including a Towing Customer Bill of Rights and the option to opt out of further notifications. DMV notes the recommendations aim to balance consumer protections with operational practicality.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Martin Looney, Senate President Pro Tempore

The testimony explains that HB 7162 (2025) overhauled Connecticut’s towing laws to address abusive towing practices, including vehicles being sold too quickly without proper notice. It also created working groups to recommend further reforms. HB 5465 builds on those efforts and expands consumer protections, partly based on the working groups’ recommendations. The author supports several provisions, particularly the creation of a Towing Advisory Council with consumer representation to advise the DMV. However, they oppose Section 3(f), which would create a subcommittee of the Police-Ordered Towing Council to review complaints. They argue complaint review should remain with the DMV, which has the expertise and authority, and note the proposed subcommittee lacks consumer representation.

John Blair, President, Motor Transportation Association of CT

Mr. Blair urges that towing rate changes remain reasonable and aligned with existing Connecticut costs to avoid creating inflated expenses for trucking companies. It recommends that base hourly towing rates for medium- and heavy-duty vehicles not exceed rates recently adopted in Maryland. The group also supports stronger documentation requirements for police-initiated tows, including itemized invoices, photos or videos, and time records to ensure transparency. They suggest allowing the DMV commissioner flexibility to extend the one-year complaint deadline in special cases. The testimony supports the “tower of choice” provision and requests representation on the Towing Advisory Council. Finally, it encourages establishing a clear schedule of storage rates to provide cost predictability for the industry. Mr. Blair also requested that MTAC be added to the Towing Advisory Committee in the future.

Fred Campanella, Owner, Towing facility

Mr. Campanella supports some provisions but raises several key concerns. The writer supports a towing portal, but argues it should collect limited data (VIN, plate, tow date, company contact, storage location) and not include pricing information. Major points of contention include the two-hour data entry requirement, which small businesses say is unrealistic, and the administrative burden of extensive reporting. The author also opposes allowing abandoned vehicles to be repurchased at scrap value, saying it would cap towing fees and create financial losses for tow operators. Concerns are also raised about mandatory auctions for all abandoned vehicles, which may be impractical. The testimony recommends revising EV towing rates,

expanding towing mileage limits, and adding broader industry representation to the Towing Advisory Council.

Michael Festa, Owner, MyHoopty.com

Michael Festa, owner of MyHoopty Towing and a member of the Association of Connecticut Towing, provided testimony on HB 5465 highlighting provisions he supports and those needing revision.

Key points of support:

- Hourly billing for police-ordered towing
- Rates that reflect true operating costs
- Separate storage rates for electric vehicles
- Traffic Incident Management (TIM) training
- Advance notice before DMV policy or form changes
- Removal of the \$1,500 vehicle value threshold

Key concerns or opposition:

- The proposed Police-Ordered Towing Council structure
- Section 9 allowing former owners to reclaim vehicles after auction for scrap value
- Embedding itemized invoices in certified notices

Mr. Festa urges lawmakers to retain the bill's improvements but revise provisions that could create financial or administrative problems for towing operators.

Robert Greco, Highway Emergency Response Team

Raised Bill 5465 represents a significant step forward in modernizing Connecticut's oversight and regulation of nonconsensual and police-ordered towing. With the refinements outlined in this testimony, the bill will more effectively protect consumers, increase transparency, promote fairness, and support the essential public-safety role performed by Connecticut's heavy-duty towing and recovery professionals. We also strongly recommend that the surcharge for electric vehicles be set by this committee and take effect in October 2026.

Howard Handler, Senior Director of Strategy, Policy, and Government Affairs, National Insurance Crime Bureau

Mr. Handler supports the bill but asks that the Towing Advisory Council that will be formed include a representative of the insurance industry.

Frank Heusser, Frank's LLC

Mr. Heusser says the bill contains both helpful and problematic provisions, particularly for small towing businesses. The author supports creating a towing portal but argues it should require only basic information (vehicle details, VIN, tow date, company name, and storage location) and allow 48 hours for data entry instead of the proposed two hours. They support Traffic Incident Management (TIM) certification for tow operators to improve safety. However, they oppose mandatory auctions for all vehicles and allowing owners to reclaim vehicles for junk value, saying it would encourage nonpayment and create storage costs for towing companies. The testimony also urges the state to establish electric vehicle towing rates immediately rather than waiting until 2029.

Two additional towing companies support the bill with changes

Three others also support the bill with changes

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Kristina Baldwin, Vice President, APCIA; Eric George, President, Insurance Association of Connecticut; Sean McLaughlin, Regional Vice President, State Affairs Nat. Assoc. of Mutual Insurance Companies

APCIA, IAC, and NAMIC opposes provisions that would significantly increase towing and storage rates, including proposed surcharges for electric vehicles. Because police-ordered towing is nonconsensual, drivers and insurers cannot shop for prices, meaning higher towing costs would directly raise auto insurance premiums statewide. Insurers also oppose hourly billing models, high winching fees, administrative surcharges, and large rate increases without supporting data. They argue flat-rate pricing is more predictable and fairer for routine tows. The industry also requests insurance representation on the Towing Advisory Council and supports transparency measures such as itemized invoices, consumer complaint processes, and a database of towed vehicles, which improve oversight without increasing costs.

Maria Battaglia, Avenue Auto Sales Inc.

The testimony raises concerns that proposed changes could create administrative burdens and financial pressures for small towing companies. It argues a statewide electronic portal to track towed vehicles is unnecessary because local police already help owners locate vehicles quickly, and many unclaimed vehicles are unregistered or abandoned, limiting the portal's usefulness while increasing taxpayer costs. The testimony also opposes allowing former owners to repurchase abandoned vehicles at junkyard value, saying it rewards nonpayment and prevents towing companies from recovering towing, storage, and administrative costs. It also raises public safety concerns, noting many abandoned vehicles are not roadworthy or legally operable. The speaker urges lawmakers to adopt balanced policies that protect towing operators who provide essential roadside and public safety services.

Eileen Colonese, Farmington Motor Sports

Eileen Colonese of Farmington Motor Sports opposes HB 5465 in its current form, arguing it places additional oversight, administrative requirements, and operational burdens on towing companies without adjusting towing rates to reflect rising costs. She says towing businesses—many of them small, family-run operations—already face increasing expenses for equipment, insurance, staffing, and regulatory compliance while providing essential public safety services such as clearing accidents and assisting law enforcement. A major concern is the proposed towing portal, which she argues goes far beyond the originally discussed concept and would create significant administrative workload. Ms. Colonese also says the bill does not reflect prior collaborative discussions with the industry and urges lawmakers to pause the legislation and work with towing operators to develop a more balanced solution.

Nine additional towing companies oppose the bill

Reported by: Cindy Panioto

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