



ISRI is the voice of the recycling industry, promoting safe, economically sustainable and environmentally responsible recycling through networking, advocacy and education.

ISRI Position on Legislation Addressing the Theft of Catalytic Converters (As Approved by the ISRI Board of Directors on Jan. 19, 2023)

Overview

The recycled materials industry works closely with law enforcement and other local authorities to help combat the theft of catalytic converters. Consistent with that activity, we support strong enforceable laws aimed at effectively preventing the theft of these devices and requiring steps to assist in tracking suspicious activities to aid enforcement and reduce the occurrence of these crimes. Such laws should support the continued recycling of catalytic converters purchased legitimately, which is critical to providing a secure and sustainable supply of precious metals and critical minerals increasingly in demand for manufacturing. More than 30 million catalytic converters are recycled each and every year through the recycled materials industry, supplying a renewable source of high quality materials for the manufacture of new converters, catalysts, pharmaceuticals and other consumer products while providing a sustainable alternative to the mining of finite natural resources.

The ease of the theft of the catalytic converter has made prevention a challenge, which has caused significant public attention to be directed towards efforts to stop the thieves and strengthen prosecution. Historically, catalytic converter thefts have often involved individuals and small criminal operators. More recently, arrests have been connected to large, organized interstate criminal operations, and have resulted in the recovery and seizure of thousands of catalytic converters and millions of dollars. However, these arrests are few and far between as the law enforcement community faces challenges involving an underground market fueled by criminals able to exploit statutory loopholes not designed to handle this increasingly sophisticated crime.

Therefore, ISRI has developed the following legislative principles that outline effective tools we consider important to curbing the theft of catalytic converters while preserving legitimate purchases that are necessary to supply the high-quality materials needed for the manufacture of new consumer products and infrastructure.

Legislative Principles

1. **Identification.** We support the marking of attached and functioning catalytic converters with an identifying number in a permanent manner, such as a Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) or VIN derivative, at time of initial sale of the vehicle. Options to assure the highest effectiveness include at the time of vehicle manufacture by the Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM), prior to date of sale of the vehicle. We support marking programs on vehicles in continued use, except end of life vehicle that should be exempted from marking of the converter.



2. **Possession, Sale and/or Purchase of Detached Catalytic Converters.**
 - a. Possession of detached catalytic converters and catalytic converter substrate should be restricted solely to those entities who should reasonably be in possession through their normal course of business and to individuals who can provide proof of legitimate ownership.
 - b. Only companies who can demonstrate “Proof of Legitimacy” may purchase a detached catalytic converter and/or catalytic converter substrate.
 - c. A method for providing “Proof of Legitimacy” (e.g., through registration) should be outlined in legislation and include provisions that preserve the confidentiality of all confidential business information and include all stakeholders in its development. Only entities with a physical address are eligible to obtain a “Proof of Legitimacy.”

3. **Recordkeeping.** Recording requirements should be required for all purchases of detached catalytic converters and at every level of purchase. Recordkeeping should be required for business-to-business transactions, as well as individual transactions.
 - a. Transactions with individuals should capture information identifying the seller such as through a driver’s license or similar government id, the date of transaction, volumes sold, and the identifying number on the catalytic converter(s).
 - b. Records for business-to-business transactions should include the Proof of Legitimacy (this will provide the necessary identifying name and address), the date of the transaction, and volumes sold.

4. **Resale.** Legislation should specify that used detached catalytic converters are eligible for resale to the consumer as a used auto part as long as they meet or exceed the criteria to be deemed EPA compliant (currently requiring specified testing, certification, labeling, and reporting).

5. **Recognition.** Detached catalytic converters should be recognized as recyclable material.