



*Introduction of Ordinance No. 4251
Adding Chapter 10.53 to HBMC Title 10*

Prohibiting the Unlawful Possession of Catalytic Converters

April 5, 2022

**SUPPLEMENTAL
COMMUNICATION**

Meeting Date: 4/5/2022

Agenda Item No.: 28(22-249)

Background

- Catalytic converters are located underneath vehicles and reduce the amount of harmful pollutants released from the exhaust system and into the environment.
- They're highly valued for their precious metals (i.e. platinum, palladium, rhodium) which are altogether valued at ~\$11,000 per ounce (depending on market conditions).
- As such, thefts are on the rise nationally, with 3 out of 10 theft claims filed in California.



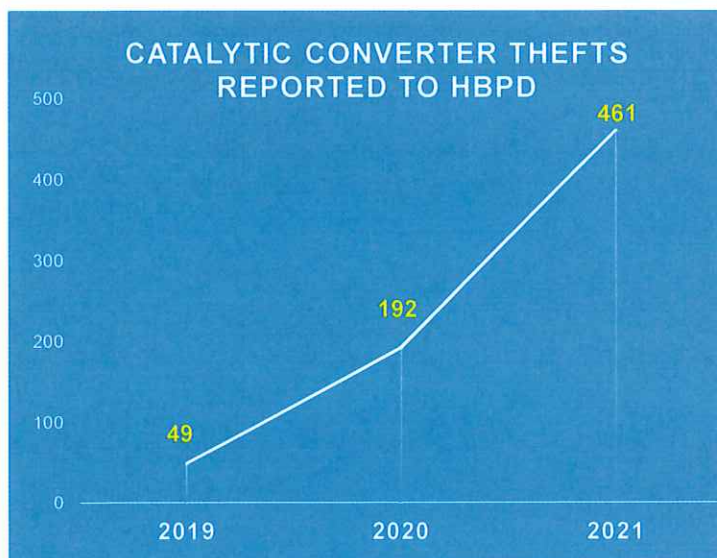
Background



- Thefts are further incentivized due to:
 - The ease and speed of removal using common tools (i.e. reciprocating saw)
 - Lack of identifying markers that make it nearly impossible to find owners and therefore prosecute criminals
- Most thefts remain unresolved.
- The average cost for a vehicle owner to replace a converter and repair residual damage to a vehicle is \$2,000, depending on the car make and model.



Catalytic Converter Theft Statistics



Ongoing Prevention Efforts

- HBPD actively engages in prevention efforts by hosting free “etching events” to engrave identifying information on catalytic converters. This makes them less prone to thefts and more traceable on the black market.
- HBPD also teaches residents about practices like parking in well-lit areas and installing protective cages around catalytic converters.
- **However, HBPD would benefit from additional tools to deter the transportation, sale and distribution of stolen converters.**



Potential Prevention Efforts

- Currently HBPD is unable to ask individuals who are in possession of unattached catalytic converters for proof of ownership or the legitimate means of obtaining them. This limits the City's ability to deter thefts.
- Local cities including Irvine, Lake Forest, and several in San Diego County adopted ordinances to prohibit the transportation of unattached catalytic converters without proof of ownership.
- Mission Viejo also approved the first reading of a similar ordinance with a 2nd reading scheduled for 4/12/22.



Proposed Ordinance 4251

- If approved, Ordinance No. 4251 would establish that it is unlawful for any individual (except a core recycler) to possess an unattached catalytic converter without all of the valid forms of proofs below:
 - License plate and VIN of the car from which the catalytic converter was removed
 - Name, address, phone number of the vehicle owner
 - Signature of the owner authorizing removal of the catalytic converter
 - Name, address, phone number of the current owner of the catalytic converter
- Each violation of this ordinance may be prosecuted as a misdemeanor, subject to a fine not to exceed \$1,000, imprisonment up to 6 months, or both.
- This ordinance would provide HBPD with legal authority to deter and potentially reduce the transfer and/or theft of catalytic converters locally.



Recommendation

(1) Approve for introduction Ordinance No. 4251, "An Ordinance of the City Council of the City of Huntington Beach Adding a New Chapter 10.53 to Title 10 of the Huntington Beach Municipal Code, Prohibiting the Unlawful Possession of Catalytic Converters in the City, and Making a Finding of Exemption Under CEQA."

OR

(2) Do not approve the first reading of the ordinance and direct staff accordingly.





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