



Willie L. Hines, Jr.
City of Milwaukee Common Council

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Council President Hines Proposes Changes to Curb Scrap Metal Thefts, Strengthen City Licensing and Regulations

Alderman Willie L. Hines, Jr. has introduced legislation meant to help put metal thieves out of business and to help the city better manage the burgeoning business of scrap metal dealing and recycling.

Alderman Hines will discuss the legislation and will be joined by several local pastors whose churches and facilities have recently been hit hard by metal thieves during a **news conference at 2 p.m. TODAY (Thursday, March 22) at Way of the Cross Missionary Baptist Church, 1401 W. Hadley St.**

The price of scrap metal has triggered a surge in thefts and illegal activity in Milwaukee and across the state, Alderman Hines said. One resolution he introduced at yesterday's Common Council meeting – file # 111628 – directs the Intergovernmental Relations Division-Department of Administration to seek uniform statewide solid waste regulatory reform for dealing in discarded, salvageable and recyclable materials.

“Some of the most serious challenges to law enforcement involve the unlawful movement of salvageable metal and motor vehicles in and out of the City of Milwaukee, but this is also a matter of statewide and regional concern and can't be addressed through local ordinances and enforcement alone,” Alderman Hines said, adding: “It's time for the state to step up to the plate.”

File # 111629 sponsored by Alderman Hines and also introduced at yesterday's Council meeting, seeks to further strengthen the city's licensing and regulation of junk and scrap metal collectors and dealers and motor vehicle salvage dealers. Alderman Hines said recent changes in city requirements for record-keeping and reporting by junk dealers have gone a long way to help enforcement efforts, but he notes it has also become clear that “there are a few loopholes to be closed and some additional measures are needed to address the few dealers in the City that continue to present a problem.”

Alderman Hines said it is in the long-term best interest of the city to ensure scrap and salvage dealers are properly regulated and licensed. He said cleaning up discarded materials and recycling and salvage protects the environment and improves city neighborhoods.

“Also, in an economic and jobs sense the city does not want to discourage legitimate business and income-generating opportunities for residents engaged in recycling and neighborhood cleanup,” he said.

“But most importantly, this effort is about public safety, because the theft and illegal sale and scrapping of property, especially salvageable metals from residences, businesses and houses of worship - and from vandalizing of vacant properties - contributes to neighborhood blight and threatens the stability of homes, families and neighborhoods,” he said.