

January 30, 2023

Chair Kelly Moller and Members of the Committee
Public Safety, Finance, and Policy Committee
Minnesota House of Representatives

RE: House File 686 – Stolen Vehicle Investigations

Dear Chair Moller and Members of the Committee:

The National Insurance Crime Bureau (NICB) is a national, century-old, not-for-profit organization supported by approximately 1,200 property and casualty insurance companies, including many who write business in Minnesota. Working hand-in-hand with our member companies and Minnesota law enforcement, we help to detect, prevent, and deter insurance crimes, including vehicle and catalytic converter theft. While NICB provides value to our member companies, we also serve a significant public benefit by helping to stem the estimated billions of dollars in economic harm that insurance crime causes to individual policyholders across the country every year.

Nationally, vehicle theft totals are approaching near record highs and new analysis by the NICB, indicates these trends show no signs of slowing down. Vehicle theft data, provided by the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) and analyzed by NICB, indicates over 745,000 vehicles were stolen in the first three quarters of 2022, with over 250,000 having been reported to law enforcement since the end of June. This is a 24% increase compared to this same time period in 2019. If this trend continues, totals could exceed one million stolen vehicles nationally by the end of the year and surpass pre-pandemic highs by more than 100,000 stolen vehicles. Minnesota has mirrored this disturbing trend: auto thefts have increased 34% in the state from 2019 to 2021.

Beyond the loss to an owner and the resulting financial impacts – including in the form of higher insurance premiums for Minnesota consumers – vehicle thefts often have serious second-order effects on society. For example, vehicles are frequently stolen under violent conditions resulting in physical harm to car owners and other victims. Additionally, organized criminal rings are increasingly stealing cars as an alternative revenue stream as well as to commit other violent crimes.

House File 686 would permit law enforcement to use mobile tracking devices after a vehicle has been reported stolen without obtaining a court order, but with the owner's consent. This proposal would go a long way towards helping stem the tide of increased automobile crime in Minnesota.

Accordingly, we ask for your strong support in favor of HF 686.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me at csepich@nicb.org or (847) 772-7667.

Sincerely,

Craig Sepich

Craig Sepich
Assistant Director
Office of Strategy, Policy, & Government Affairs
National Insurance Crime Bureau