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Proposed Towing Ordinance Vote Postponed

Ordinance Would End 'Predatory' Towing

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INDIANAPOLIS -- The proposed crackdown on predatory towing in Indianapolis was postponed Monday night after City-County Council members heard concerns of lot owners and towing companies about having to store towed vehicles within the county or within a 10 mile radius of where the tow originated.

The ordinance would require towing companies to get licenses, have background checks, proof of insurance and be required to let drivers reclaim their vehicles 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

In addition to the proposed extended hours, towing charges would be capped at \$150 with a \$30 per day storage fee, [6News' Ericka Flye](#) reported.

Parking lot owners said they take on contracts with towing companies to protect the reserved parking spaces of their customers or tenants.

Meanwhile, lot owners said they don't think they should have to be present and sign a form every time someone ignores tow-warning signs. [A 6News Watchdog investigation](#) revealed predatory towing practices in Marion County, as vehicles were towed from parking lots throughout the night.

Lynne Sullivan, president of the Indiana Apartment Association, said they shouldn't have to be.

"Our issue is that we do not have a representative available to sign the forms in the middle of the night," Sullivan said.

The proposed ordinance would require the owner of a parking lot or an owners' authorized agent, to be present and sign off, when a car is being towed from their lot.

"We would like to see that we could have the tow companies be our agent for us like they have been in the past, if there's a valid parking permit on the car then they stay. If it's a car that should not be in the lot they can tow it away," Sullivan said.

Council president Ryan Vaughn disagreed.

"What I don't want is private apartment complexes abrogating their ability to tow to a tow company, because the tow truck driver has a financial incentive to tow cars," Vaughn said.

Mike Holt, with Indy Towing, said after 48 hours, it costs to track down the car owner.

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"Because we're having to access Indiana records, we have to do certified mail and we have to pay people to do that for us," Holt said.

Holt agreed with most of the other aspects of the towing proposal.

"It's the few bad apples that causes it to spread over everybody and everybody's going to be paying for what the bad companies were doing," Holt said.

Vaughn said state law already requires that a lot owner be on site and sign off on a tow, but it's not being enforced. He said he'll work with towing companies and lot owners to find a reasonable solution.

A committee vote is expected July 5 before it goes to the full council.

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