

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE REPORT

2024 Legislative Session

Reference No.: CB-002-2025

Draft No.: 2A

Committee: COW

Date: February 4, 2025

Action: FAV

REPORT: Committee Vote: Favorable with amendments 8-0 (Council Members Ivey, Burroughs, Blegay, Olson, Watson, Harrison, Dernoga, and Oriadha)

The Prince George's County Council met as the Committee of the Whole on February 4th and on February 11th, 2025, and staff provided an overview of CB-002-2025's proposed draft 2A. The bill, sponsored by Councilman Olson, was presented on January 21st regarding Watercraft Parked on County Roads. The legislation establishes fines and penalties for illegally parking watercraft. The Revenue Authority or Police Department would be required to immediately impound any boats found on roadways.

Council Staff shared changes to the legislation included in draft 2A.

Councilman Olson, the bill's sponsor, informed the committee of some of the challenges residents in District 3 have faced due to roadway visibility being dangerously obstructed by watercraft, making travel less safe for residents. Vehicles traveling in the vicinity of these obstructions face delays and hazards. Boats are, at times, very large and are not designed to be on the streets and create unnecessary challenges. Not removing these or any other hazards in a timely manner encourages additional boats, dumping, and neglect.

A number of municipalities have already banned Watercraft, including College Park and Bowie. Currently, the County code is silent on this matter.

Dinora Hernandez, representing the Office of Law, noted that the legislation would be in proper legislative form after making minor technical amendments.

Ms. Skinner, from the Office of the County Executive, thanked the sponsor for participating in a meeting with staff, including Samara Gomez, Deputy Director of the Revenue Authority, and stated that the administration is in opposition to draft 2A and requested that it be held for another week for additional work. Ms. Gomez expressed concern about the level of the fines proposed versus the cost of properly disposing of boats and suggested that it could incentivize individuals to risk the fines as opposed to the high cost of disposing of a boat. Disposal costs average \$100 per sq foot or \$2,500-\$3,000 on average, not including fuel, etc., making it less costly to dump and risk the

fines. Unlike boats, if a car is towed it can be salvaged. Operational challenges such as storage and identification and the challenges in accomplishing these tasks were also discussed. The hull identification number is often removed making holding the owner responsible very challenging. If the vessel cannot be identified and is in the right of way, it is refused and becomes the responsibility of the Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPW&T).

Council Members Harrison and Oriadha asked operational questions and inquired about the requirements for imposing the higher fines allowed by state law for illegal dumping. State law allows for fines of up to \$30,000 for dumping. Council Vice Chair Burroughs requested further clarification about existing operational procedures.

Council Member Dernoga questioned whether the fines are steep enough and pointed out that the County needs to recognize that there are two different sections. One for those registered and another for those dumped.

During the February 11, 2025, Committee of the Whole meeting, staff noted that an additional meeting was held with agency representatives, and additional amendments were discussed. The changes between drafts 2A and 2B were described.

Page 2, line 27, section (J) added.

Page 3, lines 13-19 section (b)

(A) expanded ANY VEHICLE DESIGNED TO TRAVERSE WATER THAT IS PARKED ON A TRAILER DISPLAYING VALID REGISTRATION, INVALID REGISTRATION, OR NO REGISTRATION AT ALL.

Page 3, lines 30-31 removed.

Page 4, line 11, and line 27 added clarifying language.

Page 5, line 1, Section 26-162(a): **An additional tier for the fines was added: ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS (\$100) FOR THE FIRST VIOLATION, FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS (\$500) FOR A SECOND VIOLATION, AND ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$1,000) FOR EACH ADDITIONAL VIOLATION.**

Page 5, section (f), has been added to reference Maryland state law for illegal dumping, which carries a \$30,000 fine.

The Department of the Environment or the Police Department would work on behalf of the Revenue Authority to remove abandoned vehicles.

Beginning September 1, 2025, a report will be required documenting the number of complaints and their status.

After further discussion, the Prince George's County Council, sitting as the Committee of the Whole, voted favorably on CB-002-2025 proposed draft 2B, 8-0.

