

COUNTY COUNCIL OF PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND

2024 Legislative Session

Resolution No. CR-054-2024

Proposed by Council Member Ingrid Watson

Introduced by Council Members Watson, Olson, Ivey, Fisher, Oriadha, Franklin,
Harrison and Hawkins

Co-Sponsors _____

Date of Introduction June 11, 2024

RESOLUTION

1 A RESOLUTION concerning

2 **Public Safety Involving Kias and Hyundais**

3 For the purpose of encouraging the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to issue a
 4 recall of all Kias and Hyundais manufactured between 2011 and 2022, to request insurance
 5 companies' policies provide coverage on these vehicles and a statement of justification when
 6 coverage is denied for consideration of the County Council.

7 WHEREAS, the automakers Kia and Hyundai did not install industry-standard engine
 8 immobilizer technology on certain models between 2011 and 2022, resulting in millions of Kia
 9 and Hyundai vehicles being built without an anti-theft device that prevents the car from starting
 10 without the key or fob; and

11 WHEREAS, the residents of Price George's County Maryland have seen an increase in car
 12 thefts of Kias and Hyundais which contributes to a growing public safety concern of its citizens;
 13 and

14 WHEREAS, the Maryland Insurance Administration has been transparent in reporting that
 15 Kias and Hyundais vehicles continue to be stolen at alarming rates in Maryland and nationwide;
 16 and

17 WHEREAS, according to the Prince George's Police Department's 2023 statistics, the
 18 number of vehicles stolen and attempted stealing totaled 4,845, which rose to approximately
 19 68% from 2022.

20 WHEREAS, according to the Prince George's Police Department's 2023 statistics, the
 21 number of juvenile arrests increased from 2022, culminating in the theft of 22 Hyundai and 21

1 Kias.

2 WHEREAS, since January 1st of 2024, 470 Kias and 799 Hyundais for a total of 1,269 cars
3 have been stolen accounting for 49% of all stolen cars; and

4 WHEREAS, according to the National Insurance Crime Bureau, a non-profit organization
5 that tracks crime and fraud, more than 1 million vehicles were stolen across the country with
6 Maryland as the second most drastic rise in thefts when compared to the previous year, with theft
7 percentage increases of 63%; and

8 WHEREAS, in the State of Maryland, insurance companies are prohibited from denying
9 coverage to policy holders or raising premiums for Kia and Hyundai vehicles; and

10 WHEREAS, if any Prince George's County resident who owns a Kia or Hyundai has been
11 denied insurance coverage, may file a complaint through the Maryland Insurance Administration
12 (MIA) on their website at <https://insurance.maryland.gov/Consumer/Pages/FileACompliant.aspx>
13 and;

14 WHEREAS, current Kia and Hyundai manufacturer's starting systems are not in
15 compliance with federal standards and pose a great risk to public safety; and

16 WHEREAS, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has the
17 authority to order recalls of passenger vehicles that do not comply with Federal Motor Vehicle
18 Safety Standards (FMVSS) and/or that have a defect posing an unreasonable risk to motor
19 vehicle safety; and

20 WHEREAS, these vehicles violate Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSS),
21 which provides vehicle performance requirements to reduce the incidence of crashes resulting
22 from theft and accidental rollaway of motor vehicles. Specifically, it requires vehicles to have a
23 starting system which, whenever the key is removed from the starting system prevents the
24 normal activation of the vehicle's engine or motor; and either steering, or forward self-mobility,
25 of the vehicle, or both; and

26 WHEREAS, the rampant theft of Hyundai and Kia vehicles makes it clear that these
27 vehicles' starting systems do not prevent engine activation steering, or forward self-mobility
28 when the key is removed from the starting system. Because the vehicles have easily bypassed
29 ignition switches, a screwdriver and USB cable are sufficient to start and drive off with the cars
30 in a matter of seconds or minutes—no key required. The lack of immobilizers in these vehicles,
31 which could have provided a second line of defense against theft, has compounded, and

1 exacerbated this problem; and

2 WHEREAS, many of the Kias and Hyundai's vehicles lack engine immobilizers, antitheft
3 devices that provide a second line of defense against theft by preventing vehicles from being
4 started unless a unique code is transmitted from the vehicle key; and

5 WHEREAS, immobilizers have been industry standards for years, thus reducing rates of
6 vehicle theft substantially; and

7 WHEREAS, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reports that
8 thefts mainly ending in fatalities are on the rise because of keyed ignitions by our youth; and

9 WHEREAS, Hyundai's and Kia's planned service campaigns to provide software updates
10 to a subset of affected vehicles is simply inadequate to remedy the safety issues presented by
11 these vehicles; and

12 WHEREAS, a viral TikTok trend coined the "Kia Challenge" exposed Kia and Hyundai
13 vehicles lack of an immobilizer, thus prompting Hagens Berman's class action lawsuit which
14 brings up to \$200 million or more in relief for the owners of defected Kias and Hyundais. The
15 video explains how to start Kia and Hyundai vehicles with a screwdriver and USB charging cord.

16 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be forwarded to the
17 Prince George's House and Senate Delegations of the Maryland General Assembly encouraging
18 them to issue a recall.

19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
20 (NHTSA) urges an immediate recall of unsafe Hyundai and Kia vehicles manufactured between
21 2011 and 2022; that NHTSA shall produce yearly reports on Kias and Hyundais that are not
22 manufactured properly and that lack engine immobilizers, ubiquitous antitheft devices that
23 provide a second line of defense against theft by preventing vehicles from being started unless a
24 unique code is transmitted from the vehicle key; and

25 BE IT FUTHER RESOLVED that the Prince George's County Police Department shall
26 provide an annual report and present the report to the Prince George's County Council within 45
27 days of adoption of this provision on any thefts or attempted thefts involving juveniles and adults
28 on any Kia or Hyundai in each Councilmanic district.

Adopted this 11th day of June , 2024.

COUNTY COUNCIL OF PRINCE
GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND

BY: _____
Jolene Ivey
Chair

ATTEST:

Donna J. Brown
Clerk of the Council