

**SUBMITTAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA**



FROM: Supervisor John J. Benoit

SUBMITTAL DATE:
March 11, 2014

SUBJECT: Support Assembly Bills 2312 (Metal Theft Database) and 2313 (Metal Theft Taskforce)

RECOMMENDED MOTION: That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Support Assembly Bills 2312 and 2313, which propose to generate funding for law enforcement to fight metal theft; and
2. Authorize the chairman of the board to forward the Board's position of support of Assembly Bills 2312 and 2313 to the bill's authors, the Riverside County state legislative delegation and our Sacramento advocates.

BACKGROUND:

Metal theft is a major problem in California and has a devastating impact on property owners, utilities and governments because the cost to repair the damage far exceeds the value of the scrap metal that was stolen.

Departmental Concurrence



 John J. Benoit
 Fourth District Supervisor

FINANCIAL DATA	Current Fiscal Year:	Next Fiscal Year:	Total Cost:	Ongoing Cost:	POLICY/CONSENT (per Exec. Office)
COST	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	Consent <input type="checkbox"/> Policy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
NET COUNTY COST	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	

SOURCE OF FUNDS: N/A	Budget Adjustment: 0
	For Fiscal Year: 0

C.E.O. RECOMMENDATION: N/A

County Executive Office Signature N/A

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

- Positions Added
- Change Order
- A-30
- 4/5 Vote

Prev. Agn. Ref.: _____ **District:** _____ **Agenda Number:** _____

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BACKGROUND (continued):

When a theft occurs, thieves will often take the stolen materials from one city and travel many miles before selling the stolen items to scrap metal recyclers in order to avoid detection. This presents challenges for local enforcement when reporting metal crimes and alerting recycling centers to possible stolen materials that may turn up at their businesses.

At this time, there is no designated database from which recycling centers are required to receive updates on reported metal thefts in their respective regions.

The Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries (ISRI) operates a database but currently participation for individual recycling businesses in California is optional.

Assemblyman Nestande has introduced two pieces of legislation to help fight metal theft.

AB 2312

This bill would require all scrap metal recycling centers in California to receive updates from the ISRI metal theft database with information on reported thefts in their region. This bill would also encourage local law enforcement agencies to utilize the ISRI database and report crimes they are made aware of. The ISRI reporting system operates by law enforcement officials submitting a report to their online database with a description of the stolen items and the date and location where they were stolen. Once that report is submitted, ISRI sends an alert to recycling centers within a 100-mile radius of where the theft occurred.

Requiring these businesses to receive updates from the ISRI-operated database would help them avoid purchasing stolen goods and reduce demand for stolen scrap metals. As the market for stolen scrap metals decreases, so, too, will the incentives for thieves to continue with future crimes. This ISRI database would also provide a powerful deterrent as thieves realize that scrap metal recycling centers are aware of their stolen goods thus increasing their chances of being caught and brought to justice.

AB 2313

This bill would establish The Metal Theft Taskforce within the California Department of Justice (DOJ). The Taskforce would distribute grants to regional and local law enforcement agencies for use in combating metal theft crimes. Grants would also be available for prosecution efforts. Funding for these grants would come from a nominal 1% assessment deducted from the payments scrap metal recyclers pay to the seller. For example, if an individual brought in metal materials to be recycled and received \$100 from the recycling center, \$1 would be directed to DOJ to fund anti-theft grants and the individual would receive \$99 in compensation for their materials.

The legislation also directs the DOJ to award grants based on a number of criteria to determine where the most pressing needs for additional funding are.

By utilizing a grant-based approach, the DOJ taskforce could distribute the funding to the law enforcement agencies or regional partnerships with the greatest needs. Increasing resources in these areas through grants would create stronger deterrents for potential thieves as successful investigations lead to convictions.

The creation of this fee on scrap metal is important because it would provide a reliable funding source specifically dedicated to stopping metal theft. The grants could be used for training, equipment and other essential tools that would allow for better investigation of metal theft crimes.

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With funding increases for better enforcement of existing laws, metal theft crimes would begin to decline. This would save homeowners, businesses, and public agencies thousands of dollars. Additionally, it would also help combat the underground scrap metal market which has grown tremendously in recent years. This would in turn benefit the legitimate law abiding businesses that have seen a decline in business.

Impact on Citizens and Businesses

AB 2312 and 2313 would benefit residents and businesses in Riverside County by creating a revenue stream to fight the costly and growing problem of metal theft.