THE SENATE THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE, 2024 STATE OF HAWAII

S.B. NO. 2733

JAN 1 9 2024

#### A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO MOTOR VEHICLES.

#### BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that over 1.2 million
 motor vehicles were registered in the State in 2022. Some of
 these vehicles have been sold by their last registered owner but
 have never been transferred into the name of the new owner.
 These vehicles are listed in county motor vehicle records as
 "transfer pending".

7 The legislature also finds that section 286-52, Hawaii 8 Revised Statutes, requires the seller of a motor vehicle to 9 provide notice to the director of finance of the relevant county 10 within ten days of the sale of a vehicle. However, 11 section 286-52, Hawaii Revised Statutes, also requires the buyer 12 of the vehicle to submit to the director of finance a properly 13 endorsed certificate of ownership within thirty days of the sale. In many cases where vehicles have a "transfer pending" 14 15 status, the seller of the vehicle may have complied with the 16 seller's obligations, but the buyer failed to complete the 17 buyer's obligations. In addition, because Hawaii law does not

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require the county director of finance to verify the new owner's
 identification listed in the "notice of transfer" form submitted
 by the seller, counties often do not know who owns these
 improperly transferred vehicles since the transfer of ownership
 has not been perfected.

6 The legislature is concerned that criminals have committed 7 numerous crimes using vehicles without perfected transfers, 8 including sexual assaults, robberies, burglaries, thefts, and 9 purse snatchings. Although witnesses often record the license 10 plates of vehicles involved in these crimes, this information is 11 of little help to law enforcement because current ownership of 12 the vehicles was not properly recorded.

13 The legislature believes that requiring transferees of 14 motor vehicles, mopeds, and trailers to verify their 15 identification to the respective county director of finance will 16 help to ensure that county vehicle ownership records are current 17 and complete. This requirement will also improve community 18 safety by making it easier for law enforcement to determine the 19 ownership of vehicles used in crimes.

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Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to:



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1 Require transferors and transferees of used motor (1) 2 vehicles, mopeds, and trailers, including those owned by persons who do not intend to drive them on public 3 4 highways, to appear together before the county 5 director of finance and present government-issued 6 identification to finalize the transfer; 7 Require police officers to remove from public streets (2) 8 any motor vehicles, mopeds, or trailers not properly 9 transferred in compliance with these procedures, and 10 further prohibit those vehicles from being released to 11 a transferee unless the transferee presents a valid 12 certificate of ownership; and Allow a towing facility to dispose of vehicles not 13 (3) 14 claimed within thirty days of removal from a public 15 street. SECTION 2. Section 249-14.2, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is 16 17 amended to read as follows: 18 "[{] §249-14.2[}] Procedure when registration of a bicycle 19 or moped transferred. (a) Upon transfer of registered 20 ownership in or to a bicycle or moped, the [person whose 21 interest is to be transferred] transferor and the transferee



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1	shall wri	te their signatures with pen and ink upon the
2	certifica	te of registration issued for the bicycle or moped,
3	together	with the address of the transferee in the appropriate
4	space pro	vided upon the certificate.
5	(b)	Within thirty calendar days of the transfer of
6	registere	d ownership of a bicycle or moped[ <del>, the</del> ]:
7	(1)	The transferee of a bicycle shall forward the
8		certificate of registration so endorsed to the
9		director of finance [ <del>who shall file the certificate.</del> ] <u>;</u>
10		and
11	(2)	The transferor and transferee of a moped shall appear
12		together before the director of finance to present the
13		certificate of registration endorsed pursuant to
14		subsection (a); provided that the director of finance
15		shall require the transferor and transferee to present
16		valid government-issued identification before
17		accepting the certificate.
18	The	director of finance may charge a fee of $5_{\underline{\prime}}$ which shall
19	be deposi	ted into the county bikeway fund $_{\it L}$ for each new
20	certifica	te of registration issued. Whenever a transferor or
21	transfere	e fails to comply with these provisions, the director

1	of finance shall charge <u>the person not in compliance</u> a fee of	
2	\$10, in addition to the fee provided in this section, for the	
3	issuance of a new certificate of registration.	
4	(c) [ <del>The</del> ] <u>After certifying that the transferor and</u>	
5	transferee have complied with subsections (a) and (b), the	
6	director of finance[, upon receipt of the certificate of	
7	registration properly endorsed and the required fee, ] shall	
8	[ <del>register</del> ]:	
9	(1) File the certificate of registration;	
10	(2) Register the bicycle or moped; and [shall issue]	
11	(3) Issue to the owner thereof by reason of the transfer a	
12	new certificate of registration in the manner and form	
13	provided for in an original registration.	
14	(d) Until the director of finance has issued the new	
15	certificate of registration as provided in subsection (c),	
16	delivery of [ <del>such</del> ] <u>the</u> bicycle or moped shall be deemed not to	
17	have been made [and], the registration [thereto] shall be deemed	
18	not to have passed, and the intended transfer shall be deemed to	
19	be incomplete and not to be valid or effective for any purpose.	
20	(e) In the event of the transfer by operation of law in or	
21	to a bicycle or moped, as upon inheritance, devise, or bequest,	

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1 order in bankruptcy, or insolvency, execution sale, repossession 2 upon default in performance of the terms of a lease or executory 3 sales contract, or otherwise than by the voluntary act of the 4 person whose interest is to be transferred, the certificate of 5 registration shall be signed upon the spaces provided by the 6 personal representative of, or successor in interest of the 7 person whose registered ownership or interest is so transferred 8 in lieu of [such] the person. Every personal representative, 9 receiver, trustee, sheriff, or other representative hereinabove 10 referred to shall file with the director of finance a notice of 11 any transfer by sale, lease, or otherwise by the person, of any 12 such bicycle or moped, together with evidence satisfactory to 13 the director of finance of all facts entitling [such] the 14 representative to make the transfer.

(f) Any person who refuses or neglects to deliver a certificate of registration to a transferee entitled thereto under this section, shall be [punished as] subject to the penalty provided in section 249-14.6.

19 (g) Every dealer or manufacturer, upon transferring a
20 bicycle or moped, whether by sale, lease, or otherwise, shall
21 immediately give notice of the transfer to the director of



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finance upon the official form provided by the director of
 finance. [Every such] The notice shall contain the date of the
 transfer, the names and addresses of the transferor and
 transferee, and [such] a description of the bicycle or moped as
 may be called for in the official form.

6 (h) Every person, other than a dealer, upon transferring a 7 bicycle or moped, whether by sale, lease, or otherwise, shall 8 within ten days give notice of the transfer to the director of 9 finance upon the official form provided by the director of 10 finance. Every notice shall contain the date of transfer, the 11 names and addresses of the transferor and transferee, and [such] a description of the bicycle or moped as may be called for in 12 13 the official form. Any person who violates this subsection 14 shall be fined not more than \$100.

(i) Whenever the registered owner of a bicycle or moped or any dealer or manufacturer has given notice to the director of finance of a transfer of the registered ownership to the bicycle or moped, as provided in subsection (g) or (h), and has delivered the certificate of registration bearing the transferor's signature to the transferee as required by subsection (a), the transferor shall be relieved from liability,



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1	civil or criminal, which the transferor might subsequently incur
2	by reason of being the registered owner of the bicycle or moped.
3	(j) Notwithstanding any other law to the contrary, a
4	police officer shall remove from a public street any moped for
5	which the director of finance has received a notice of transfer
6	as provided in subsection (h), but for which the transferee has
7	failed to comply with the requirements of subsection (b). The
8	transferee of the moped shall be cited and fined not more than
9	\$100. No moped removed from the street pursuant to this
10	subsection shall be released to a transferee unless the
11	transferee presents a valid certificate of ownership; provided
12	that if the transferee fails to present a valid certificate of
13	ownership within thirty calendar days of the removal of the
14	moped from the street, the moped shall be disposed of in
15	accordance with part I of chapter 290.
16	[ <del>(j)</del> ] <u>(k)</u> Any person who falsely or fraudulently gives
17	notice to the director of finance of a transfer of registered
18	ownership to a bicycle or moped shall be subject to the penalty
19	provided in section 249-14.6."

20 SECTION 3. Section 286-52, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is 21 amended to read as follows:



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1 "§286-52 Procedure when title or interest of vehicle 2 transferred; delivery of certificate mandatory. (a) Upon a transfer of the title or interest of a legal owner in or to a 3 4 vehicle registered under this part, the [person whose title or 5 interest is to be transferred] transferor and the transferee 6 shall write their signatures with pen and ink upon the 7 certificate of ownership issued for the vehicle, together with 8 the addresses of the [person whose title or interest is to be 9 transferred] transferor and the transferee in the appropriate 10 spaces provided upon the certificate. The signature of the 11 [person whose title or interest is to be transferred] transferor 12 and signature of the transferee shall each serve as an 13 attestation by that respective party that the information 14 provided on the certificate is correct. Any person who provides 15 false or fraudulent information under this subsection shall be fined no less than \$500 and no more than \$1,000. 16 17 (b) Within thirty calendar days thereafter, the transferor 18 and transferee shall [forward the certificate of ownership so 19 endorsed to] appear together before the director of finance [who

20 shall file the same; ] to present the certificate of registration

21 endorsed pursuant to subsection (a); provided that [if] the



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1 director of finance shall require the transferor and transferee 2 to present valid government-issued identification before 3 accepting the certificate; provided further that if the recorded 4 lien holder does not have an office in the State, the applicable 5 period shall be sixty days. 6 Whenever a transferor or transferee fails to comply with 7 these provisions, the director of finance shall charge the 8 person not in compliance a fee of \$50, in addition to the fee 9 provided in section 286-51, for a new certificate of ownership. 10 (C) [Subsection (b), requiring a transferee to forward the 11 certificate of ownership after endorsement to the director of 12 finance, shall not apply to the transferee of a vehicle who was 13 not intending to and does not drive the vehicle or permit the 14 vehicle to be driven upon the public highways, but the 15 transferee, upon transferring the transferee's interest or title 16 to another, shall give notice of the transfer to the director of 17 finance and endorse the certificate of ownership to the new 18 legal owner and the certificate of registration to the new 19 owner.] If the director of finance has ascertained as of the 20 date of the application that the registered owner has not 21 deposited or paid bail with respect to any summons or citation

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1 issued to the registered owner for stopping, standing, or 2 parking in violation of traffic ordinances within the county or 3 has outstanding charges and fines owed to the county relating to 4 the disposition of an abandoned vehicle under the registered 5 owner, including for costs related to towing, storage, 6 processing, and disposal, the director may require, as a 7 condition precedent to the transfer, that the registered owner 8 deposit or pay bail with respect to [the summons] outstanding 9 summonses or citations or pay all outstanding charges and fines 10 relating to the disposition of the abandoned vehicle; provided 11 that payment of all outstanding charges and fines relating to 12 the disposition of the abandoned vehicle shall not be a 13 condition precedent to the transfer if the abandoned vehicle was 14 stolen or taken from the registered owner without permission or authorization and a police report for the abandoned vehicle is 15 16 filed within a period of time, to be determined by the director of finance [of each county], after discovery of the abandoned 17 vehicle. 18

19 (d) [The] After certifying that the transferor and
20 transferee have complied with subsection (b), the director of



1 finance [, upon receipt of the certificate of ownership properly 2 endorsed, shall [register]: (1) File the certificate of registration; 3 4 (2) Register the vehicle [7]; and [shall issue] 5 (3) Issue to the owner and legal owner entitled thereto by reason of the transfer a new certificate of 6 7 registration and the certificate of ownership, 8 respectively, in the manner and form hereinabove 9 provided for original registration. 10 Until the director of finance has issued the new (e) 11 certificate of registration and certificate of ownership [as in] 12 pursuant to subsection (d) [provided], delivery of the vehicle 13 shall be deemed not to have been made and title thereto shall be deemed not to have passed, and the intended transfer shall be 14 deemed to be incomplete and not to be valid or effective for any 15 16 purpose, notwithstanding any provision of the Uniform Commercial Code; provided that a security interest in a motor vehicle shall 17 18 be perfected as provided in the Uniform Commercial Code, 19 section 490:9-311 and that the validity, attachment, priority, 20 and enforcement of the security interest shall be governed by 21 Article 9 of the Uniform Commercial Code.



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1 (f) In the event of the transfer by operation of law of 2 the title or interest of a legal owner in and to a vehicle 3 registered under this part, as upon inheritance, devise, 4 bequest, order in bankruptcy, insolvency, execution sale, 5 repossession upon default in performance of the terms of a lease 6 or executory sales contract, or otherwise than by the voluntary 7 act of the person whose title or interest is so transferred, the 8 certificate of ownership shall be signed upon the spaces 9 provided by the personal representative, receiver, trustee, 10 sheriff, or other representative, or successor in interest of 11 the person whose title or interest is so transferred in lieu of 12 that person. Every personal representative, receiver, trustee, 13 sheriff, or other representative or successor hereinabove 14 referred to shall file with the director of finance a notice of 15 any transfer by sale, lease, or otherwise by the person, of the 16 vehicle  $[\tau]$  being transferred, together with evidence 17 satisfactory to the director of finance of all facts entitling 18 that person to make the transfer. Upon notice given to the 19 director of finance that transfer by operation of law of the 20 title or interest of a legal owner or a registered owner has 21 been effected pursuant to any provision of law, the director of



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finance shall send to the legal owner or the registered owner or 1 both a notice by registered mail of the action and requesting 2 3 the delivery to the director of finance of the certificate of ownership or the certificate of registration, as the case may 4 be, within ten days after date of mailing of the notice, and any 5 person who refuses or neglects to deliver the same to the 6 7 director of finance pursuant to the notice shall be guilty of a 8 misdemeanor and [punished as] subject to the penalty provided in section 286-61. 9

10 (q) Nothing in the foregoing subsections shall prevent a legal owner from assigning the title or interest in or to a 11 12 vehicle registered under this part to another legal owner at any 13 time without the consent of and without affecting the interest 14 of the holder of the certificate of registration thereof. Upon filing with the director of finance [of] a certificate of 15 ownership endorsed by the legal owner and a transferee of legal 16 17 ownership, the director of finance [shall], regardless of 18 whether the certificate of registration has expired, shall enter 19 the name of the new legal owner upon the records of the 20 director's office and shall [forthwith] issue a new certificate of ownership to the new legal owner in the form for original 21



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registration. Upon so doing, the director of finance shall send
 to the registered owner a notice by mail of the action.

3 (h) Any person who refuses or neglects to deliver a
4 certificate of ownership to a transferee entitled thereto under
5 this part, shall be [punished as] subject to the penalty
6 provided in section 286-61.

7 (i) Every dealer, upon transferring a motor vehicle,
8 whether by sale, lease, or otherwise, shall immediately give
9 notice of the transfer to the director of finance upon the
10 official form provided by the director of finance. Each notice
11 shall contain the date of the transfer, the names and addresses
12 of the transferor and transferee, and a description of the
13 vehicle as may be called for in the official form.

(j) Every person, other than a dealer, upon transferring a motor vehicle, whether by sale, lease, or otherwise, shall within ten days give notice of the transfer to the director of finance upon the official form provided by the director of finance. Every notice shall contain the date of transfer, the names and addresses of the transferor and transferee, and a description of the vehicle as may be called for in the official



form. Any person who violates this subsection shall be fined no
 more than \$100.

3 Whenever the registered owner of any motor vehicle or (k) any licensed dealer has given notice to the director of finance 4 5 of a transfer of the title or interest in the motor vehicle, as 6 provided in subsection (i) or (j), and has delivered the 7 certificate of ownership bearing the transferor's signature to 8 the transferee as required by subsection (a), the transferor 9 shall be relieved from any liability, civil or criminal, from 10 the date the transferor delivers the motor vehicle into the 11 transferee's possession, which the transferor might otherwise 12 subsequently incur by reason solely of being the registered 13 owner of the vehicle.

14 (1) Notwithstanding any other law to the contrary, a police officer shall remove from a public street any vehicle for 15 16 which the director of finance has received notice of transfer 17 pursuant to subsection (j), but for which the transferee has 18 failed to comply with the requirements of subsection (b). The 19 transferee of the vehicle shall be cited and fined no more than 20 \$100. No vehicle removed from the street pursuant to this subsection shall be released to a transferee unless the 21



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1 transferee presents a valid certificate of ownership; provided 2 that if the transferee fails to present a valid certificate of ownership within thirty calendar days of the removal of the 3 4 vehicle from the street, the vehicle shall be disposed of in 5 accordance with part I of chapter 290. 6 [(1)] (m) A licensed dealer who has forwarded a properly 7 endorsed certificate of ownership to the director of finance 8 shall be relieved of any civil liability, from the date the 9 transferor delivers the motor vehicle into the transferee's 10 possession, which the transferor might otherwise subsequently 11 incur by reason solely of being the registered owner of the 12 vehicle; provided that a specific written authorization to 13 forward the certificate has been obtained from the transferee. 14 [(m)] (n) Any person who falsely or fraudulently gives notice to the director of finance of a transfer of title or 15 16 interest in a motor vehicle shall be subject to the penalty provided in section 286-61. 17 18  $\left[\frac{1}{1}\right]$  (o) Any organization that receives a motor vehicle 19 as a charitable donation shall be deemed, upon receipt of the motor vehicle, to be a transferee for purposes of this section 20

21 and shall be subject to all of the applicable rights,



1 responsibilities, and liabilities of a transferee under this
2 section."

3 SECTION 4. Section 286-52.5, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
4 amended to read as follows:

5 "\$286-52.5 Procedure when registration of a trailer
6 transferred. (a) Upon transfer of registered ownership in or
7 to a trailer, the [person whose interest is to be transferred]
8 transferor and [the] transferee shall write their signatures
9 with pen and ink upon the certificate of registration issued for
10 the trailer, together with the address of the transferee in the
11 appropriate space provided upon the certificate.

12 (b) Within thirty calendar days of the transfer of 13 registered ownership of a trailer, the transferor and transferee 14 shall [forward the certificate of registration to] appear 15 together before the director of finance [who shall file the certificate.] to present the certificate of registration 16 17 endorsed pursuant to subsection (a); provided that the director 18 of finance shall require the transferor and transferee to 19 present valid government-issued identification before accepting 20 the certificate. Whenever a transferor or transferee fails to 21 comply with this section, the director of finance shall charge



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1 the [transferee] person not in compliance a fee of \$50, in
2 addition to the fee provided in this section, for the issuance
3 of a new certificate of registration.

4 (c) If the director of finance has ascertained as of the 5 date of the application that the registered owner has not 6 deposited or paid bail with respect to any summons or citation 7 issued to the registered owner for stopping, standing, or 8 parking in violation of traffic ordinances within the county or 9 has outstanding charges and fines owed to the county relating to 10 the disposition of an abandoned vehicle under the registered 11 owner, including for costs related to towing, storage, 12 processing, and disposal, the director may require, as a 13 condition precedent to the transfer, that the registered owner 14 deposit or pay bail with respect to all [such] outstanding 15 summonses or citations or pay all outstanding charges and fines 16 relating to the disposition of the abandoned vehicle; provided 17 that payment of all outstanding charges and fines relating to 18 the disposition of the abandoned vehicle shall not be a 19 condition precedent to the transfer if the abandoned vehicle was 20 stolen or taken from the registered owner without permission or 21 authorization and a police report for the abandoned vehicle is



1 filed within a period of time, to be determined by the director 2 of finance of each county, after discovery of the abandoned 3 vehicle. 4 The director of finance, upon receipt of the (d) 5 certificate of registration properly endorsed, shall [register]: 6 File the certificate of registration; (1) 7 (2) Register the trailer; and [shall issue] 8 (3) Issue to the owner thereof by reason of the transfer a 9 new certificate of registration in the manner and form 10 provided for original registration. 11 Until the director of finance has issued the new (e) 12 certificate of registration as provided in subsection (d), 13 delivery of [such] the trailer shall be deemed not to have been 14 made and registration thereto shall be deemed not to have 15 passed, and the intended transfer shall be deemed to be 16 incomplete and not to be valid or effective for any purpose. 17 In the event of the transfer by operation of law in or (f) 18 to a trailer registered under section 286-47.2, as upon 19 inheritance, devise, or bequest, order in bankruptcy, or 20 insolvency, execution sale, repossession upon default in 21 performance of the terms of a lease or executory sales contract,



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1 or otherwise than by the voluntary act of the person whose interest is to be transferred, the certificate of registration 2 shall be signed upon the spaces provided by the personal 3 4 representative of, or successor in interest of the person whose 5 registered ownership or interest is so transferred in lieu of 6 [such] the person. Every personal representative, receiver, 7 trustee, sheriff, or other personal representative hereinabove 8 referred to shall file with the director of finance a notice of 9 any transfer by sale, lease, or otherwise by the person, of any 10 such trailer, together with evidence satisfactory to the 11 director of finance of all facts entitling [such] the 12 representative to make the transfer.

(g) Any person who refuses or neglects to deliver a certificate of registration to a transferee entitled thereto under this section, shall be [punished as] subject to the penalty provided in section 286-61.

(h) Every dealer or manufacturer, upon transferring a trailer, whether by sale, lease, or otherwise, shall immediately give notice of the transfer to the director of finance upon the official form provided by the director of finance. [Every-such] Each notice shall contain the date of transfer, the names and



addresses of the transferor and transferee, and [such] <u>a</u>
 description of the trailer as may be called for in the official
 form.

4 Every person, other than a dealer or manufacturer, (i) 5 upon transferring a trailer, whether by sale, lease, or 6 otherwise, shall within ten days give notice of the transfer to 7 the director of finance upon the official form provided by the 8 director of finance. Every notice shall contain the date of 9 transfer, the names and addresses of the transferor and 10 transferee, and [such] a description of the trailer as may be 11 called for in the official form. Any person who violates this 12 subsection shall be fined not more than \$100.

13 Whenever the registered owner of any trailer or any (j) 14 dealer or manufacturer has given notice to the director of 15 finance of a transfer of the registered ownership to the trailer, as provided in subsections (h) and (i), and has 16 17 delivered the certificate of registration bearing the 18 transferor's signature to the transferee as required by 19 subsection (a), the transferor shall be relieved from liability, 20 civil or criminal, which the transferor might subsequently incur 21 by reason of being the registered owner of the trailer.



(k) A dealer or manufacturer who has forwarded a properly
 endorsed certificate of registration to the director of finance
 shall be relieved of any civil liability, only if, in addition
 to the requirement of subsection (j), the dealer or manufacturer
 obtains from the transferee a specific written authorization to
 forward the certificate.

7 (1) Notwithstanding any other law to the contrary, a police officer shall remove from a public street any trailer for 8 9 which the director of finance has been given notice of transfer 10 pursuant to subsection (i), but for which the transferee has 11 failed to comply with the requirements of subsection (b). The 12 registered owner of a motor vehicle drawing a trailer not 13 properly transferred shall be cited and fined no more than \$100. No trailer removed from the street pursuant to this subsection 14 shall be released to a transferee unless the transferee presents 15 16 a valid certificate of ownership; provided that if the 17 transferee fails to present a valid certificate of ownership within thirty calendar days of the removal of the trailer from 18 19 the street, the trailer shall be disposed of in accordance with 20 part I of chapter 290.



[-(1)-] (m) Any person who falsely or fraudulently gives
 notice to the director of finance of a transfer of registered
 ownership to a trailer shall be subject to the penalty provided
 in section 286-61.

5 [(m)] (n) The director of finance may charge a fee which 6 shall be deposited in the general fund for each new certificate 7 of registration issued. The fee charged to issue a new 8 certificate of registration shall be established by the county's 9 legislative body."

SECTION 5. This Act does not affect rights and duties that matured, penalties that were incurred, and proceedings that were begun before its effective date.

13 SECTION 6. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed14 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

15 SECTION 7. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

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INTRODUCED BY:

"On



#### Report Title:

Counties; Motor Vehicles; Mopeds; Trailers; Transfer of Ownership

#### Description:

Requires transferors and transferees of used motor vehicles, mopeds, and trailers, including motor vehicles whose owners do not intend to drive the vehicle on public highways, to appear together before the county director of finance with government-issued identification to finalize a transfer of ownership. Directs police officers to remove from public streets any motor vehicle, moped, or trailer not properly transferred. Requires transferees to present a valid certificate of ownership in order to claim a vehicle removed from a public street.

The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.

