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Manitoba News Release

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MANITOBA GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES SCRAP METAL ACT, REGULATION COME INTO FORCE TODAY

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New Transaction, Record-Keeping Rules Will Protect Property, Public Safety: Goertzen

Today Bill 9, the Scrap Metal Act, and its corresponding Scrap Metal Regulation come into force, as part of the Manitoba government's comprehensive plan to address the increasing problem of metal theft, particularly of catalytic converters, Justice Minister Kelvin Goertzen announced today.

"The Scrap Metal Act, along with the Scrap Metal Regulation, outlines a framework that applies to the sale and purchase of scrap metal in Manitoba," said Goertzen. "The act and regulation will significantly reduce the theft of catalytic converters by disrupting resale opportunities for illegally obtained scrap metal."

Under the new framework, dealers must record the details of their transactions related to scrap metal, defined as a used item made of aluminum, brass, bronze, copper, iron, lead, steel, stainless steel, tin or a prescribed metal or alloy. Dealers must keep the transaction records for two years and provide them to a peace officer when requested. Cash transactions are not permitted for any transaction over $50.

The minister noted that transactions involving metal containers normally recycled to avoid waste, such as paint cans, as well as coins, bullion and jewellery are exempt from this record-keeping requirement. Transactions involving restricted items – defined as being highly vulnerable to theft and resale, such as catalytic converters, or having significant intrinsic value, such as plaques, monuments and statues – have even more stringent rules.

In addition to the record-keeping requirements for general scrap metal, any transactions involving restricted items must also include a photograph that provides sufficient detail to identify the item. The complete records must be submitted to the scrap metal dealer's local law enforcement agency within seven days. Cash transactions are not permitted for restricted items.

The minister noted the valuable participation of law enforcement, non-profit partners and other government agencies in their efforts to combat catalytic converter theft, highlighting the efforts of the Winnipeg Police Service (WPS), Winnipeg Crime Stoppers, the RCMP, Manitoba Public Insurance (MPI) and Criminal Property Forfeiture (CPF).

CPF provided grants to both the Winnipeg Crime Stoppers and the Steinbach RCMP to implement projects to combat the theft of catalytic converters by marking and having catalytic converters engraved with vehicle identification numbers (VIN). With an engraved VIN, police can trace the rightful owners of recovered catalytic converters and individuals with illegally obtained converters can now be charged for being in possession of stolen goods.

These crime prevention efforts, combined with making it much more difficult to resell illegally obtained scrap metal with the Scrap Metal Act and regulations, enforcement efforts of police agencies like the WPS in its recent arrests and the public awareness efforts of MPI, this criminal behaviour can be collectively disrupted, the minister noted. Through data collection collaboration between MPI and the Manitoba Criminal Intelligence Centre, this activity will continue to be tracked and the impacts will be monitored.

"Winnipeg Crime Stoppers appreciates the funding supplied by Criminal Property Forfeiture. Along with the help of our many partners in the community, this provided us the opportunity to develop the 'Save Your Cat' program," said Paul Johnson, chairperson of Winnipeg Crime Stoppers. "We were able to provide one more idea to address the epidemic of catalytic converter thefts. Identification is a key to prosecuting the criminals responsible."

"The thefts of catalytic converters are affecting many Manitobans, and in the Steinbach area, we have certainly seen an increase in this type of crime," said Supt. Jim Mirza, acting Criminal Operations Officer, Manitoba RCMP. "I am

proud of the initiative shown by our Steinbach detachment in applying for Criminal Property Forfeiture funds to purchase engravers to give to local mechanic shops. Our hope is that this will increase our ability to enforce against this crime and reduce the number of Manitobans who become victim to it."

As more Manitobans have been significantly impacted by the increase in catalytic converter thefts, MPI revised its depreciation/betterment schedule to ensure it was reasonable and fair for customers.

Recognizing that most vehicle owners do not have to replace their catalytic converter unless it is stolen, MPI concluded the depreciation/betterment schedule for converters should not be the same as for other exhaust components. Vehicle owners whose catalytic converters are stolen will continue to pay their normal deductible for their claim, but claimants will now save an average of more than $100 on the depreciation/betterment fee thanks to the revised schedule.

MPI will continue working with law enforcement agencies and the Manitoba Criminal Intelligence Centre, and is developing a public awareness initiative that will include theft prevention advice, such as parking indoors or in well-lit areas or installing a vehicle alarm.

- 30 -

For more information:

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