

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2026 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**  
**First Reader**

Senate Bill 782  
Finance

(Senator Jackson)

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**Telecommunications Infrastructure - Protections**

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This bill (1) requires a junk dealer, scrap metal processor, or antique dealer residing in the State to register a complete description of purchased “telecommunications equipment” with local law enforcement; (2) restricts the authorized payment methods for purchases of telecommunications equipment by these dealers and processors; and (3) subjects violators of these prohibitions to business license revocation and criminal penalties. The bill also prohibits a person from recklessly or willfully and maliciously damaging “telecommunications infrastructure” and establishes a criminal penalty for a violation of this prohibition. Finally, the bill adds “telecommunications equipment” to the existing definition of “junk or scrap metal” used in provisions that address licensing, recordkeeping, and procedural requirements for junk dealers and scrap metal processors.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** The bill is not expected to materially affect State operations or finances.

**Local Effect:** The bill is not expected to materially affect local government operations or finances.

**Small Business Effect:** Potential meaningful.

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**Analysis**

**Bill Summary:**

*Purchase and Registration of Telecommunications Equipment*

Under the bill, each junk dealer, scrap metal processor, or antique dealer residing in the State must register a complete description of purchased telecommunications equipment, as specified, with the local sheriff or other designated law enforcement official. These dealers

or processors may only purchase telecommunications equipment by issuing a check mailed to the seller's address and are prohibited from selling or otherwise disposing of telecommunications equipment for 30 days from the date of purchase.

In addition to revocation of any State junk license held by the person, a violator of these provisions is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by a maximum fine of \$2,000.

"Telecommunications equipment" means an item that an individual knows, or reasonably should know, to be ordinarily used by, or belong to, a telephone, telegraph, internet, or other wireless communication company.

### *Damaging, Defacing, or Destroying Telecommunications Infrastructure*

The bill prohibits a person from recklessly or willfully and maliciously defacing, damaging, or destroying telecommunications infrastructure. Violators are guilty of a felony and subject to imprisonment for up to six months and/or \$5,000 fine.

This prohibition does not apply to (1) an employee of a telecommunications company or a person acting under the authority of a telecommunications company or (2) the supervision and control of a telecommunications company and the company's material, equipment, or facilities by a political subdivision within which the company is doing business.

"Telecommunications company" means a company that provides broadband internet, cable television, telephone, or other wireless communication services.

"Telecommunications infrastructure" means items used to provide broadband internet, cable television, telephone, or other wireless communication services. It includes (1) antennae; (2) fiber optic cables; (3) headends; (4) telephone poles; (5) radio transceivers; (6) radio towers; (7) wireless support structures; (8) small cell facilities; and (9) office facilities.

**Current Law:** "Junk" or "scrap metal" includes nonferrous metal articles made wholly or substantially of specified materials (*e.g.*, light copper, heavy copper, aluminum, tin, and stainless steel) and specified used articles made of ferrous or nonferrous metals (*e.g.*, catalytic converters, hard-drawn copper, propane tanks, cell tower batteries, and used articles owned by a public utility). "Junk" or "scrap metal" does not include food or beverage cans.

In general, scrap metal processors and junk dealers must be licensed to operate in the State. For each of these professions, State law requires licensees to keep detailed records about junk or scrap metal purchases and specifies the circumstances under which these records must be submitted to a regulatory agency or a law enforcement officer.

For example, for each purchase of junk or scrap metal in the State, a junk dealer or scrap metal processor must keep a record in English that states (1) the date and time of purchase; (2) a description of the junk or scrap metal purchased; (3) the amount paid for the junk or scrap metal; (4) the registration plate number, make, and model of any vehicle used; (5) the name and address of the individual from whom the junk or scrap metal was acquired; (6) the signature of the individual from whom the junk or scrap metal was acquired and the person who accepted the material; and (7) personal identifying information of the individual from whom the junk or scrap metal was acquired. A junk dealer or scrap metal processor must submit a copy of the record to the appropriate primary law enforcement unit, by the end of the first business day following the date of the transaction.

If a State or local law enforcement agency has reasonable cause to believe that junk or scrap metal that is in the possession of the vendor is stolen, the law enforcement agency may issue a written hold notice. A vendor is prohibited from removing items identified in the notice from their place of business for the duration of the hold period, which may not exceed 15 days.

A violation of these requirements is a misdemeanor punishable by a \$500 maximum fine for a first offense and imprisonment for up to one year and/or a \$5,000 maximum fine for a subsequent offense.

**Small Business Effect:** The bill may have a meaningful effect on small business junk dealers, scrap metal processors, and antique dealers who are subject to additional requirements, license revocation, and criminal penalties under the bill.

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### **Additional Information**

**Recent Prior Introductions:** Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

**Designated Cross File:** HB 1100 (Delegate Pruski) - Economic Matters.

**Information Source(s):** Harford and Montgomery counties; Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts); Office of the Public Defender; Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 25, 2026  
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