



MISSOURI SENATE

Rob Mayer
25th Senate District

JEFFERSON CITY

CAPITOL BUILDING, ROOM 331
JEFFERSON CITY, MO 65101

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Contact: Irene Murray
(573) 751-3859

Sen. Mayer's Proposal to Address Widespread Copper Theft Moves Forward with First-Round Senate Approval

JEFFERSON CITY – The Missouri Senate gave first-round approval this week to a bill intended to short-circuit the efforts of thieves who steal copper and aluminum metal in Missouri. Sen. Rob Mayer, R-Dexter, sponsored the legislation, which would require stronger record-keeping by scrap dealers and make it a felony to steal or unlawfully sell copper or aluminum.

Sen. Mayer's Senate Bill 1034 addresses a growing theft problem that is affecting consumers, farmers, business owners and utilities across the state — and the nation. Lured by high metal prices and the prospect of fast cash, thieves are stealing items ranging from catalytic converters, to back-flow valves, to telephone cable, to farming equipment, to manhole covers — often creating life or death situations in their wake.

"The theft of copper wire is severely disrupting our lives and putting our citizens' safety at great risk," Sen. Mayer said. "These measures will work to put an end to these reckless crimes."

Under the proposal, scrap dealers would be required to obtain driver's license and vehicle information from the people who sell them copper. Records would include date, time and place of transaction, be kept for two years after the date of purchase, and would be available for inspection by any law enforcement officer.

The act exempts certain scrap metal transactions from record-keeping when the total is less than \$50, or when copper or aluminum is a minor part of the transaction, with exceptions. Payments of more than \$100 would be made only by check or another traceable payment method, except for aluminum beverage can purchases. Other provisions include prohibiting scrap metal dealers from purchasing or possessing metal beer kegs for converting to scrap, unless the keg is purchased from a brewer or brewer's representative. Scrap yards would be prohibited from purchasing cast iron manhole covers without proof of ownership.

Scrap dealers who violate record-keeping requirements would face a class A misdemeanor and thieves who steal copper and aluminum scrap metal would be charged with a class D felony.

"The key to stopping these thefts lies with the scrap buyers," Sen. Mayer said. "With stronger guidelines for scrap metal purchases and stiffer penalties for theft, we will be able to curb this alarming problem and make Missouri safer for our citizens."

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*Senator Rob Mayer represents the people of Wayne, Ripley, Butler, Stoddard, New Madrid, Pemiscot
and Dunklin counties in the Missouri Senate.*