

# News Release



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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### GOVERNOR O'MALLEY SIGNS LAW TO STIFFEN PENALTIES FOR IMPROPERLY TOWED VEHICLES

**BALTIMORE, MD** – Governor Martin O'Malley today signed legislation that helps improve safety for Maryland's families while they are on the road. Senate bill 174 and its counterpart in the House of Delegates, HB 1119, outlines steps a motorist must take to secure trailers and other vehicles when towed on Maryland roads and penalties for those who do not.

"This legislation clearly articulates the procedures that must be followed and the equipment that must be used to properly attach small trailers and other towed vehicles," said Governor O'Malley. "With these guidelines, and stiff penalties in place for offenders, we are improving safety on our roads by giving police officers the means to charge drivers who have improperly connected their trailers."

The new legislation holds the driver – and not the owner – of the towing vehicle responsible and imposes a penalty of up to \$1,000 upon conviction of improperly connecting a towed vehicle when an accident results in serious bodily injury or death.

Senator John C. Astle (District 30, Anne Arundel County), the lead sponsor of the legislation in the Senate, commended the members of the General Assembly for their support.

"This legislation imposes clear installation standards for those hauling trailers or other vehicles," said Senator Astle. "It is our hope that with these standards, people will better assure that their trailers are properly hooked and that any potential accidents will be avoided."

"This bill will create stiff penalties for those who cause injury or death to others by improperly fastening trailers to their automobiles," said Delegate Saqib Ali (District 39, Montgomery County), the lead sponsor of the legislation in the House. "Last year, three Marylanders were killed in a crash on the Bay Bridge caused by a runaway trailer, while the driver who improperly connected the trailer was given only a minimal fine."

The Maryland Transportation Authority supported the legislation to address a void in State law, which had not been modified since the 1980s.

"The new law reflects current industry standards and equipment, and, for the first time, allows police to criminally charge violators," said Authority Chairman John D. Porcari. "The Authority commends the sponsors who rallied for passage of this legislation."

The legislation goes into effect October 1, 2008.

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*The Maryland Transportation Authority is an independent State agency that finances, owns and operates the State's seven toll facilities. The Authority's eight Members, appointed by the Governor with consent of the State Senate, serve as the agency's policy-setting and governing body. Maryland's Secretary of Transportation serves as Authority Chairman.*

