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May 24, 2013

Senator Chip Shields and Members of the General Government, Consumer and  
Small Business Protection Committee  
State Capitol  
Salem, Oregon

Dear Chairman Shields and Members of the Committee,

My apology for my not being able to be with you today. I had hoped to appear in person because I feel quite strongly about this issue since I was towed in Beaverton on August 21, 2010.

I had gone to a party held in a condo development with private streets. On the main street the curbs were painted red and said 'fire lane' and 'no parking' but I found a spot on a side street that was unmarked so I thought it was okay. I meant to check with my host but when I walked in the party was very crowded and I didn't see him immediately and I forgot. Two hours later I couldn't find my car. My host knew immediately what had happened. He told me the tow company patrols regularly.

I made a mistake and accept that. What I cannot accept are the outrageous charges. Here is the itemized list (the House committee has the original bill):

Hook up \$140

Mileage 2 miles @ \$5 = \$10 (I mapquested the trip from the address they wrote on the receipt to their lot and it is .65 miles)

Dollies \$50 parking brake (they told me this was because I had the parking brake on & the car locked—don't most of us do that?)

Pictures \$20 (I know they are required to photograph but in the age of digital photos this is absurd. They didn't even print the photos)

Dispatch \$20 (I do not even believe there was one but cannot prove it)

Gate fee \$40 (simple gate with padlock)

Storage 1 day @ \$40 per day (they had a car less than 1 ½ hours)

Grand total: \$320

Consumers usually have the choice to say no when they think goods and/or services

are overpriced but this is not the case when one's car is involuntarily towed. One is at the mercy of the tow company which is holding one's valuable asset hostage. If you need time to raise the money you end up owing more for storage.

When consumers are forced to do business with a particular business (as with utilities) it's up to government to protect them with regulations to make sure they are treated fairly and charged reasonably. This is particularly important in an industry that has some members that behave in a predatory manner as in the case of towing companies.

I ask you to pass the Senate version of House Bill 3159 and protect Oregon drivers from unscrupulous towing companies.

Thank you,

Sandy Polishuk