ROB HUTTON
WISCONSIN STATE SENATOR

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Proposal to criminalize tire dumping gets Senate hearing

MADISON – Legislation by Senator Rob Hutton (R-Brookfield) that makes the costly menace of illegal tire dumping a misdemeanor crime similar to vandalism had a public hearing in the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety on Wednesday.

Senate Bill 1059, co-authored with Rep. Bob Donovan (R-Greenfield) makes intentionally depositing four or more tires on another person's private property a Class A misdemeanor punishable by up to 9 months incarceration and a $10,000 fine. In addition to the fine, it also requires courts to order restitution equal to the actual cost to the property owner to properly dispose of the unlawfully deposited tires.

Under current law, dumping junk tires on someone else's property is just a civil forfeiture offense with sporadically enforced penalties up to $1,000 and optional restitution. By contrast, the lowest level vandalism charge is a Class A misdemeanor.

"The current civil penalty treats this like littering and is not a deterrent. In fact, leniency empowers serial tire dumpers and the criminal car theft enterprises they are often part of," **Hutton said**.

Tire dumping is a statewide problem that affects property owners in urban and rural areas. Department of Natural Resources data show 151 tire-related dumping complaints statewide in 2024-25 alone, distributed all around the state. "Whether in rural areas or Milwaukee, where it's become a significant menace, residents of our state deserve a strong response to property crimes like this," **Hutton said**.

The cost of cleanup to property owners is substantial. Innocent property owners often pay thousands of dollars per incident to remove and properly dispose of tires that were illegally dumped on their property. One victim of serial tire dumping reported total costs of $25,000 and he is not alone. The burden of receiving citations for tire dumping perpetrated by someone else and the expense of cleaning up their mess is a major cost for local businesses, who have no choice but to have the tires properly disposed.

Victims know all too well that a small number of bad actors are responsible for a most of the dumping, who far too often simply get away with it. Worse, tire dumping is often the end result of criminal enterprises that involve putting cars up on blocks and stealing their rims, leaving mountains of spare tires and one final victim—property owners.

"These criminals are intentionally avoiding lawful, environmentally appropriate disposal and the related costs by literally dumping those costs on someone else. It should be a crime," **Hutton said**.

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