



M I D W E S T

A BUTERA OWNED COMPANY

2215 UNION AVENUE, P.O. BOX 419, SHEBOYGAN, WI 53082-0419 • (920) 457-4433 • WWW.SHOPTHEPIG.COM

December 14, 2017

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Mr. Jim Owczarski
City Clerk
City of Milwaukee – City Hall Room 205
200 East Wells Street
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Re: 170927 – Substitute ordinance relating to abandonment of shopping carts

Dear Mr. Owczarski,

Piggly Wiggly Midwest, LLC, on behalf of our Milwaukee retail stores, has reviewed the proposed substitute ordinance relating to the abandonment of shopping carts (file no. 170927) and opposes this measure.

We oppose this substitute ordinance because: 1) the proposed new language of Section 110-36 is not clear on how a retailer (cart provider) could maintain compliance, particularly given that the Anti-Theft Measures as listed in paragraph 5 do not effectively eliminate the removal of shopping carts from the premises, and 2) ideologically, the idea of assessing punitive damages against the victim of a theft is just simply not right. Under this logic, the victim of a car theft could be assessed a fine to help defray the cost to taxpayers relating to the City's handling of the stolen vehicle.

To be clear, Piggly Wiggly operators are not abandoning their shopping carts nor are they consenting to the removal outside of their parking lot; the reality is quite contrary. Shopping carts are an expense but necessary convenience that we offer our customers. Retailers should not be characterized as being complicit or accepting of criminal behavior. It is a reality in our business that individuals attempt to remove shopping carts from the property for varying reasons. Some customers walk to the store and use the cart to bring their groceries home, while other people are actively looking to steal carts for their own purpose. We try our best to reduce the removal of carts from our properties as much as possible. In high theft areas, we have purchased plastic carts instead of metal to limit the theft appeal. In addition, store personnel patrol the lot daily retrieving carts from the area and also canvas the surrounding neighborhoods as often as necessary.

There is significant cost in opening and operating a grocery store. Our business brings tremendous value to our communities by satisfying customer wants and needs, creating jobs and generating tax revenues. You may have heard that being a retailer is not getting any easier - competition is getting tougher and costs to businesses continue to rise, across all levels, from insurance to utility charges. Grocers, in particular, already operating on thin margins, can only incur so much by way of expenses before they are forced to increase prices or close their doors – neither of which are desired.

Piggly Wiggly is committed to serving our Milwaukee customers and continuing to be a responsible member of the community. We agree that controlling neighborhood blight and minimizing taxpayer costs are very important and feel that the best course of action is to enforce existing laws prohibiting the theft of shopping carts, which target the actual offenders instead of the victims of the theft. We respectfully request that this substitute ordinance relating to the abandonment of shopping carts be denied and are grateful for the opportunity to provide our feedback.

Sincerely,



Brian R. Bucaro
Retail Vice President
Piggly Wiggly Midwest, LLC.