



October 16, 2024

Chair Libby Garvey
Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear Chair Garvey and members of the County Board,

The Arlington Chamber urges the County Board to remove language regarding additional written authorization, or a second signature requirement, from the trespass towing RTA. The County's Trespass Towing Advisory Board (TTAB) unanimously voted to remove that language from their recommendations. The proposed language contains major safety and operational concerns that could put the employees of Arlington businesses and properties at risk.

Adding a second signature requirement would place employees and staff of businesses or properties in unsafe situations. Business and property management staff who are designated for authorization will have to leave their role to authorize each tow from their building's property and provide their name and contact information to the owner of the illegally parked vehicle. These requirements will likely place the employees in demanding situations with aggrieved vehicle owners. Recent local news stories illustrate that these situations can be unsafe, as in one case towing operators were threatened with a firearm, and these businesses' employees would have to be involved despite not being trained to deal with these situations. The Chamber acknowledges that no one likes to be towed, but placing business employees and property staff in these dangerous situations will not benefit the community.

The TTAB, the advisory board with representatives from towing businesses, the Police Department, and the larger Arlington community, has considered which towing regulation amendments to bring forward to the County Board. Over four months of meetings and discussion, the TTAB considered proposals on permitting, licensing, and regulating towing operators. County staff prepared a draft document in late September, including the proposals for permitting and licensing, as well as provisions for an additional written authorization requirement, also known as a second signature requirement. After consideration, the TTAB unanimously removed the second signature requirement from the draft that County Staff prepared, due to concerns with safety. We strongly urge the Board to follow the TTAB's recommendations and to remove that provision from the RTA.

The Arlington Chamber asks that the County Board remove any language on second signature requirements from the RTA. Removing the second signature language would adhere to the unanimous recommendation of the TTAB, which was the result of a thoughtful, months-long process. We also urge the County Board to adhere to the additional unanimous recommendations of the TTAB towards improving the proposed permitting and licensing framework, and methods for appealing decisions. The Chamber is optimistic that concerns

about the proposed language can be addressed by further conversations with both the TTAB and with property owners and retail businesses.

We thank you for your consideration of our comments, and we look forward to continued conversations with you and with County Staff on this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate Bates". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kate Bates
President & CEO

CC: County Board Vice-Chair Takis Karantonis; County Board Members Maureen Coffey, Susan Cunningham, and Matt de Ferranti; County Manager Mark Schwartz; Deputy County Manager Aaron Miller; Acting Director of Constituent Services and Business Ombuds Katelyn Thomas.