

Assembly Bill No. 463–Committee on Judiciary

CHAPTER.....

AN ACT relating to motor vehicles; providing an expedited process for the forfeiture of certain seized vehicles; and providing other matters properly relating thereto.

Legislative Counsel’s Digest:

Existing law provides for the seizure and forfeiture of certain vehicles, including vehicles which have or which contain a part that has an identification number or mark that has been falsely attached, removed, defaced, altered or obliterated. (NRS 482.540) **Sections 2 and 3** of this bill add certain vehicles which have been illegally altered in a manner that impairs the structural integrity of the vehicles to the vehicles which are subject to seizure and forfeiture.

Section 3 requires a court to schedule a hearing for the forfeiture of such a seized vehicle not later than 7 business days after an action for forfeiture is filed. **Section 3** also requires the court to: (1) order the release of the vehicle to the owner of the vehicle or to another person who the court determines is entitled to the vehicle if the court finds that an identification number or mark which was placed on the vehicle has not been falsely attached, removed, defaced, altered or obliterated and the vehicle has not been illegally altered in a manner that impairs the structural integrity of the vehicle; or (2) order the vehicle to be destroyed or otherwise disposed of if there is no satisfactory evidence of ownership, an identification number or mark which was placed on the vehicle has been falsely attached, removed, defaced, altered or obliterated or the vehicle has been illegally altered in a manner that impairs the structural integrity of the vehicle.

EXPLANATION – Matter in *bolded italics* is new; matter between brackets ~~omitted material~~ is material to be omitted.

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEVADA, REPRESENTED IN
SENATE AND ASSEMBLY, DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. (Deleted by amendment.)

Sec. 2. NRS 482.540 is hereby amended to read as follows:

482.540 1. Any police officer, without a warrant, may seize and take possession of any vehicle:

- (a) Which is being operated with improper registration;
- (b) Which the *police* officer has probable cause to believe has been stolen;
- (c) *Which the police officer has probable cause to believe has been illegally altered in a manner that impairs the structural integrity of the vehicle;*

(d) On which any motor number, manufacturer’s number or identification mark has been falsely attached, removed, defaced, altered or obliterated; or



~~[(d)]~~ (e) Which contains a part on which was placed or stamped by the manufacturer pursuant to federal law or regulation an identification number or other distinguishing number or mark that has been falsely attached, removed, defaced, altered or obliterated.

2. A law enforcement agency or an employee of the Department whose primary responsibility is to conduct investigations involving the theft of motor vehicles shall inspect any vehicle seized pursuant to paragraph ~~[(e) or]~~ (d) *or* (e) of subsection 1 to determine whether the number or mark in question on the vehicle or part from the vehicle has been falsely attached, removed, defaced, altered or obliterated and whether any person has presented satisfactory evidence of ownership of the vehicle. The agency or employee shall prepare a written report which sets forth the results of the inspection within 30 days after the vehicle is seized.

3. If the results of the report conclude that the number or mark in question has been falsely attached, removed, defaced, altered or obliterated and that there is no satisfactory evidence of ownership, the court shall declare the vehicle forfeited and proceed in the manner set forth in NRS 482.542.

4. A person must not be charged with any criminal act which caused a motor vehicle to be seized pursuant to paragraph ~~[(e) or]~~ (d) *or* (e) of subsection 1 until the report is completed pursuant to subsection 2.

5. As used in this section, "police officer" means:

- (a) Any peace officer of the Department;
- (b) Sheriffs of counties and officers of metropolitan police departments and their deputies; and
- (c) Marshals and police officers of cities and towns.

Sec. 3. NRS 482.542 is hereby amended to read as follows:

482.542 1. Any vehicle seized pursuant to NRS 482.540 may be removed by *a law enforcement agency or* the Department to:

- (a) A place designated for the storage of seized property.
- (b) An appropriate place for disposal if that disposal is specifically authorized by statute.

2. If disposal of ~~[the]~~ *a* vehicle *seized pursuant to NRS 482.540* is not specifically authorized by statute, ~~[the vehicle is subject to forfeiture if it appears to the court having jurisdiction over the proceedings that the rightful owner of the vehicle cannot after due diligence be found.]~~ *a law enforcement agency or the Department may file a civil action for forfeiture of the vehicle:*

(a) Pursuant to paragraph (c) of subsection 1 of NRS 4.370 in the justice court of the township where the vehicle which is the subject of the action was seized if the fair market value of the



vehicle and the cost of towing and storing the vehicle does not exceed \$10,000; or

(b) In the district court for the county where the vehicle which is the subject of the action was seized if the fair market value of the vehicle and the cost of towing and storing the vehicle equals or exceeds \$10,000.

3. Upon the filing of a civil action pursuant to subsection 2, the court shall schedule a date for a hearing. The hearing must be held not later than 7 business days after the action is filed. The court shall affix the date of the hearing on a form for that purpose and order a copy served by the sheriff, constable or other process server upon each claimant whose identity is known to the law enforcement agency or Department or who can be identified through the exercise of due diligence.

4. The court shall:

(a) Order the release of the vehicle to the owner or to another person who the court determines is entitled to the vehicle if the court finds that:

(1) A motor number, manufacturer's number or identification mark which was placed on the vehicle has not been falsely attached, removed, defaced, altered or obliterated; and

(2) The vehicle has not been illegally altered in a manner that impairs the structural integrity of the vehicle; or

(b) Order the vehicle destroyed or otherwise disposed of as determined by the court, if the court finds that:

(1) There is no satisfactory evidence of ownership;

(2) A motor number, manufacturer's number or identification mark which was placed on the vehicle has been falsely attached, removed, defaced, altered or obliterated; or

(3) The vehicle has been illegally altered in a manner that impairs the structural integrity of the vehicle.

~~[3-]~~ *5. If a court declares that a vehicle seized pursuant to NRS 482.540 is forfeited, a law enforcement agency or the Department may:*

(a) Retain it for official use;

(b) Sell it; or

(c) Remove it for disposal.

~~[4. If at any time after a vehicle is seized pursuant to NRS 482.540 the rightful owner of the vehicle demands its return, the Department shall:~~

~~—(a) Return the vehicle to the owner; or~~



~~—(b) If the vehicle was declared forfeited by a court and subsequently sold or removed for disposal, pay to the owner the fair market value of the vehicle at the time of forfeiture.]~~

6. As used in this section, “claimant” means any person who claims to have:

(a) Any right, title or interest of record in the property or proceeds subject to forfeiture;

(b) Any community property interest in the property or proceeds; or

(c) Had possession of the property or proceeds at the time of the seizure thereof by a law enforcement agency or the Department.

Sec. 4. This act becomes effective on July 1, 2011.

