
SENATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

Senator Jesse Arreguín, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No: AB 647 **Hearing Date:** June 9, 2026
Author: Mark González
Version: January 5, 2026
Urgency: No **Fiscal:** Yes
Consultant: AB

Subject: *Abandoned recreational vehicles*

HISTORY

Source: Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass

Prior Legislation: AB 630 (Mark González), Ch. 699, Stats. of 2025
AB 2525 (Zbur), Ch. 721, Stats. of 2024
AB 2786 (Jones-Sawyer), Ch. 592, Stats. of 2018
AB 478 (Ridley-Thomas), Ch. 67, Stats. of 2003

Support: City of Los Angeles; City of Norwalk

Opposition: ACLU California Action; Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment Action; Buccola Family Homeless Advocacy Clinic; California Coalition for Housing and Survivor Justice; California Public Defenders Association; City of Carson; CD11 Coalition for Human Rights; Change Begins With Me (INDIVISIBLE); Citizens' Climate Lobby Santa Cruz; City of Carson; City of Lakewood; Coalition for Social Justice; Coalition on Homelessness; Corporation for Supportive Housing; Costa Mesa Affordable Housing Coalition; Disability Rights California; Equal Rights for Every Neighbor; Food Not Bombs; Glide; Homeless United for Friendship and Freedom; Housing Is a Human Right - Orange County; LA Defensa; LA Progressive; LA Raza Community Resource Center; LA Street Care & Mutual Aid; Medic Coalition of Santa Cruz County; National Alliance to End Homelessness; National Homelessness Law Center; National Vehicle Residency Coalition; Neighborhood Organizing Circle; Noho Home Alliance; Peer Voices United-sacramento; People's Homeless Task Force; Restoring Hope California; Right Livelihood; Sacramento Regional Coalition to End Homelessness; Sacred Heart Community Center; San Francisco Public Defender's Office; Santa Cruz Bread and Roses; Santa Cruz Fulltimers; Serf City Times; Starting Over INC.; Starting Over Strong; The Bride's Chamber; University of California Los Angeles; Venice Justice Committee; We are Not Invisible; Welcoming Neighbors Home; Western Center on Law & Poverty; Western Regional Advocacy Project; Wood Street Commons

Assembly Floor Vote:

68 - 0

PURPOSE

The purpose of this bill is to specify that any public agency within the Counties of Alameda and Los Angeles, including a state agency, may implement a program to dispose of recreational vehicles within those counties pursuant to specified requirements.

Existing law guarantees the right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, and provides that no warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation particularly describing the place to be searched and the persons or things to be seized. (U.S. Const., 4th Amend.; Cal. Const. art I., § 13.)

Existing law makes it unlawful for a peace officer or an unauthorized person to remove an unattended vehicle from a highway to a garage or to any other place except as provided for by California statute. (Veh. Code, § 22650, subd. (a).)

Existing law clarifies that the removal and storage of a vehicle, as authorized by California statute, is a seizure and must be reasonable under the Fourth Amendment and California Constitution. (Veh. Code, § 22650, subd. (b).)

Existing law provides that vehicle removals authorized by any authority, including California statute, that are based on the community caretaking exception, are reasonable only if the removal was necessary to achieve the community caretaking need, such as ensuring the safe flow of traffic or protecting property from theft or vandalism. (Veh. Code, § 22650, subd. (b).)

Existing law provides that law enforcement and other agencies having authority to remove vehicles shall also have the authority to provide hearings, as specified. (Veh. Code, § 22650, subd. (c).)

Existing law places the burden of establishing the validity of the removal on the storing agency. (Veh. Code, § 22650, subd. (c).)

Existing law authorizes a peace officer or other traffic enforcer of a local jurisdiction to remove a vehicle in many circumstances, including if it is left unattended, as specified, parked on a highway so as to obstruct traffic or create a hazard, illegally parked, as specified, stopped or parked for more than four hours upon the right-of-way of a freeway and the driver cannot move the vehicle, parked or left standing on a highway for 72 or more consecutive hours in violation of a local ordinance, and others. (Veh. Code, § 22651.)

Existing law authorizes any state, county or city authority charged with the maintenance of any highway to move any vehicle which is disabled or abandoned or which constitutes an obstruction to traffic from the place where it is located on a highway to the nearest available position on the same highway as may be necessary to keep the highway open or safe for public travel. (Veh. Code, § 22654, subd. (c).)

Existing law authorizes a city, county, or city and county to adopt an ordinance establishing procedures for the abatement and removal, as public nuisances, of abandoned, wrecked, dismantled, or inoperative vehicles or parts of an inoperative vehicle from private or public property. (Veh. Code, § 22660.)

Existing law requires the public agency causing the removal of a vehicle to determine, for lien sale purposes, whether its value is under \$500, between \$500 and \$4,000, or over \$4,000. (Veh. Code, § 22670.)

Existing law specifies that whenever a vehicle has been removed to a garage, the keeper shall have a lien dependent upon possession for his or her compensation for towage and for caring for and keeping safe the vehicle for a period not exceeding 60 days, as specified, and provides that no lien shall attach to any personal property in or on the vehicle, as specified. (Veh. Code, § 22851, subs. (a), (b).)

Existing law provides that whenever a peace officer or any other employee of an authorized public agency as specified removes, or causes the removal of a vehicle determined to be abandoned and the public agency, or at the request of the public agency, the lienholder determines the estimated value of the vehicle is \$500 or less, the public agency that removed, or caused the removal of vehicle shall cause the disposal of the vehicle, subject to specified requirements. (Veh. Code, § 22851.3.)

Existing law authorizes the Counties of Alameda and Los Angeles to implement a program to dispose of abandoned recreational vehicles, subject to the requirements specified below. (Veh. Code, § 22851.5, subd. (a).)

Existing law provides that whenever a peace officer or other authorized employee of a public agency removes or causes the removal of a recreational vehicle (RV) determined to be abandoned, and the public agency or lienholder determines the estimated value of the RV at \$4,000 or less, the public agency shall cause the disposal of the RV pursuant to several specified requirements, including:

- Not less than 72 hours before the recreational vehicle is removed, the peace officer or the authorized public employee has securely attached to the recreational vehicle a distinctive notice which states that the recreational vehicle will be removed by the public agency and that if the recreational vehicle is towed, it can be recovered for at least 30 days after the public agency notifies the registered owner.
- Within 48 hours of the removal, the public agency that removed the recreational vehicle or, at the request of the public agency, the lienholder shall send a notice to the registered and legal owners at their addresses of record with the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), and to any other person known to have an interest in the recreational vehicle, which must include specified information, including that the owners and interested persons have the opportunity for a poststorage hearing before the public agency that removed the vehicle.
- If the agency performing the removal is unable to collect the information necessary to identify the registered and legal owner of the recreational vehicle, including, but not limited to, the vehicle identification number, and is consequently unable to send the notice described above, the agency shall instead place and affix at least two copies of the notice within close geographic proximity to the removal location within 48 hours of the removal.
- A requested hearing shall be conducted within 48 hours of the request, as specified.

- The public agency that removed the recreational vehicle and that directed any towing and storage is responsible for the costs incurred for towing and storage if it is determined in the hearing that the recreational vehicle was not inoperable or was not a hazard to public health, safety, and welfare.
- If, after 30 days from the notification date, the recreational vehicle remains unclaimed and the towing and storage fees have not been paid, and if no poststorage hearing was requested or a poststorage hearing was not attended, the public agency that removed, or caused the removal of, the recreational vehicle shall provide to the lienholder who is storing the recreational vehicle, on a form approved by the Department of Motor Vehicles, authorization to dispose of the recreational vehicle, which shall include a verification that the recreational vehicle is inoperable.
 - If the recreational vehicle is operable, the public agency may authorize the disposal of the recreational vehicle only if it was towed due to it posing an environmental or public safety hazard.
- Local public agencies authorized and designated to remove recreational vehicles pursuant to the above shall annually report to their governing body specified information regarding recreational vehicles removed in the preceding year.

Existing law sunsets the above provisions related to the removal of recreational vehicles in Alameda and Los Angeles Counties on January 1, 2030.

This bill specifies that any public agency within the Counties of Alameda and Los Angeles, or a state agency, may implement an abandoned recreational vehicle disposal program in those counties pursuant to the requirements specified above.

This bill extends the sunset date for the authorization to implement a recreational vehicle disposal program as described above from January 1, 2030 to January 1, 2032.

COMMENTS

1. Need for This Bill

According to the author:

Abandoned and inoperable vehicles pose significant public health, safety, and environmental challenges across California. I authored AB 630 last year to address these issues to allow local agencies in LA County & Alameda County to implement a pilot program to dispose recreational vehicles valued at \$4,000 or less if the vehicle is declared inoperable and is public safety/environmental hazard before disposal. However, due to a drafting error, additional clarity is needed to ensure that local governments within Los Angeles County and Alameda County are allowed to implement this pilot program and AB 647 gives that clarity.

2. Authority to Remove and Impound Generally

SB 1758 (Kopp) Chapter 1221, Statutes of 1994, gave law enforcement a new tool to enforce Vehicle Code violations—the ability to impound someone’s vehicle for driving while unlicensed or driving with a suspended license. After initial data showed that SB 1758 was effective in reducing convictions for driving without a license or with a suspended license, the Legislature began expanding the violations for which a vehicle could be impounded.¹ AB 2288 (Aguiar), Chapter 884, Statutes of 1996 expanded vehicle impoundments to include speed contests, and SB 1489 (Perata) Chapter 411, Statutes of 2002, granted law enforcement the ability to impound a vehicle for reckless driving. Today, there are nearly three dozen bases upon which local authorities – primarily peace officers – may remove and impound a vehicle under the California Vehicle Code.

California Vehicle Code section 22651 sets forth the main circumstances under which local authorities may remove and impound a vehicle, including leaving a vehicle unattended, obstructing traffic so as to create a hazard, identifying a stolen or embezzled vehicle, blocking a private driveway or firefighting equipment (including a hydrant), when an officer arrests a person driving or in control of a vehicle and is required to take the person into custody, identifying a vehicle which has been issued five or more unaddressed parking citations, and leaving the vehicle parked or standing on a road for 72 or more consecutive hours in violation of a local ordinance authorizing removal.² Of particular relevance to this bill, existing law also authorizes a peace officer or other local official designated to perform such functions to remove a vehicle from a street or public or private property when they have reasonable grounds to believe that the vehicle has been abandoned.³

After removing a vehicle, per one of the aforementioned reasons or otherwise, the officer is required to take the vehicle to “the nearest garage or place of safety or to a garage designated or maintained” by the officer’s employing agency, a process commonly referred to as “impoundment.”⁴ Impoundments can last anywhere from 24 hours to 30 calendar days depending on a variety of factors, and a vehicle’s registered owner can usually reclaim their impounded vehicle by showing proof of registration and paying a specified fee.⁵ However, if a vehicle remains unclaimed for a certain length of time depending on the value of the vehicle, the keeper of that vehicle (usually the owner of the tow yard or impound lot, referred to as a “lienholder”), may dispose of the vehicle via a “lien sale,” which is essentially a vehicle auction.

¹ DeYoung, David. “An evaluation of the specific deterrent effects of vehicle impoundment on suspended, revoked, and unlicensed drivers in California.” *Accident Analysis & Prevention*. Vol. 31, Issues 1-2, January 1999, Pp. 45-53. An evaluation of the specific deterrent effects of vehicle impoundment on suspended, revoked, and unlicensed drivers in California - ScienceDirect

² Many local ordinances explicitly prohibit leaving a vehicle on any public street or parking facility for 72 or more consecutive hours and authorize removal pursuant to this Vehicle Code provision (Veh. Code, § 22651, subd. (k).) For example, see Roseville Municipal Code § 11.20.020, City of Roseville, CA Parking in General; for an example of a 72-hour notice, see the City of Sacramento’s at <https://www.cityofsacramento.gov/content/dam/portal/cdd/Code-Compliance/VEHICLE-VIOLATION-NOTICE-2018.pdf>

³ Veh. Code, § 22669

⁴ Veh. Code, § 22850.

⁵ Veh. Code, §§ 22850.3, 22850.5, 22851, 22851.3

3. Removal of Abandoned Vehicles and AB 630

Existing law sets forth a specific procedure for vehicles that have been removed by law enforcement⁶ after being deemed abandoned, and when the vehicle has been determined to be of “low value” (a valuation of \$500 or less). Under this procedure, law enforcement must attach a notice (“pre-removal notice”) to the vehicle at least 72 hours prior to its removal indicating that the removal will take place. Within 48 hours of removal, either the removing agency or the lienholder must send another notice (“post-removal notice”) to the vehicle’s registered owner at their addresses of record with the DMV, with the following information: contact information for the public agency providing the notice, information regarding where the vehicle is being stored, the legal authority for removal, a statement that the vehicle may be disposed of 15 days from the date of notice, and a notice that the owners have the opportunity for a hearing to determine the validity of the storage if a request is made within 10 days of the notice.⁷ If, after 15 days from the post-removal notification, the vehicle remains unclaimed and the towing and storage fees have not been paid, and no request for post storage hearing was received, the removal agency must provide the lienholder with authorization to dispose of the vehicle.⁸

Last year, the author of this bill authored AB 630 (Gonzalez) Chapter 699, Statutes of 2025, which sought to apply a modified version of this framework to abandoned recreational vehicles. The stated objective of AB 630 was to prevent abandoned and towed RVs from being resold to so-called “vanlords” who purchase RVs during a lien sale and “return them to the streets, perpetuating the cycle of unsafe housing and environmental hazards.”⁹ Toward that end, AB 630 authorized the Counties of Alameda and Los Angeles to implement a pilot program, running through January 1, 2030, for the expedited disposal of abandoned recreational vehicles. Specifically, under this pilot program, Alameda and Los Angeles Counties may dispose of RVs valued at \$4,000 or less, a substantial increase from the statewide “low value” threshold of \$500 or less. AB 630 allows these counties to bypass the lien sale process and dispose of abandoned RVs via dismantling within 30 days of notifying the registered owner that the vehicle was towed. However, prior to dismantling an abandoned RV, the public agency that towed the vehicle must comply with a host of procedural requirements – modeled after those related to standard vehicles and referenced in the preceding paragraph – intended to protect the owner’s interest in the vehicle, including provide a 72-hour notice prior to towing and an opportunity to challenged the removal of the vehicle at a poststorage hearing.¹⁰

4. AB 630 Litigation and Effect of This Bill

In December 2025, the Los Angeles City Council voted 12-3 to instruct City Attorney Hydee Feldstein Soto to immediately implement AB 630 and report back within 30 days to provide an implementation plan and “operational procedures for identifying, valuing and processing abandoned recreational vehicles.”¹¹ Shortly thereafter, a coalition of human rights groups filed a lawsuit challenging AB 630 on the grounds that because the bill authorized “the Counties of Alameda and Los Angeles” to implement the abandoned RV removal pilot, the City of Los

⁶ The statute indicates that any public agency authorized to remove abandoned vehicles may perform the functions described, but for the sake of brevity will simply refer to all authorized entities as “law enforcement.”

⁷ Veh. Code, § 22851.3, subds. (a)-(d.) A requested hearing must be held within 48 hours of that request.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Analysis of AB 630 prepared by the Senate Committee on Public Safety, published June 22, 2025, p.9.

¹⁰ AB 630 is codified at Veh. Code, § 22851.5

¹¹ “LA to start removing certain abandoned RVs from streets and dismantling them.” *NBC Los Angeles*. 9 December 2025. <https://www.nbclausangeles.com/news/local/los-angeles-rv-removal-disposal-bll-ab-630/3813691/>

Angeles had no legal authority to implement an AB 630 program. On February 19, 2026, Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Curtis Kin agreed with the coalition and issued a ruling striking down Los Angeles' plan to implement AB 630. In his ruling, Judge Kin noted that:

The City [of Los Angeles] does not contest that it lacks authority under AB 630 to implement a program to dispose of recreational vehicles with an estimated value of \$4,000 or less. Nor could it. AB 630 unambiguously states that “[t]he Counties of Alameda and Los Angeles may implement a program to dispose of recreational vehicles.” AB 630 provides no such authority to the City of Los Angeles. Indeed [...] newly proposed legislation (AB 647) recognizes that AB 630 authorizes only the Counties of Alameda and Los Angeles to implement programs to dispose of abandoned recreational vehicles, as the new legislation specifically and explicitly authorizes public agencies within those counties to implement such programs.

Accordingly, this bill authorizes any public agency within the Counties of Alameda and Los Angeles, including a stage agency, to implement an abandoned recreational vehicle disposal program in those counties pursuant to the provisions of AB 630, and extends AB 630's original sunset date from January 1, 2030 to January 1, 2032.

5. Argument in Support

According to Mayor Karen Bass of Los Angeles, the bill's sponsor:

Unsheltered homelessness can take on many forms, including people living in vehicles. The 2024 Greater Los Angeles Point in Time Count found more than 13,500 vehicles being used as dwellings, including more than 6,800 RVs. These oversized vehicles are designed for recreational use, not long-term urban dwelling, and they pose significant environmental, public health, and safety risks both to those living inside and to all city residents. Most importantly, people living in their RVs deserve access to a safe and affordable home.

In Los Angeles, towed RVs are commonly bought by “vanlords,” who purchase multiple lien sale RVs for extremely low costs, sometimes as low as \$50. They then bring RVs back onto the streets and rent them out, perpetuating a challenging cycle. AB 630, which was approved by the Legislature and Governor last year, was intended to address this issue by creating a 5-year pilot program that allows an impounded RV to be dismantled in Alameda and Los Angeles Counties if it is valued at \$4,000 or less and other specified conditions are met. It also requires additional notifications and reporting for cities before an RV can be dismantled, as well as fee relief for wrongly towed RVs.

In September 2023, my office assembled a City-wide interdepartmental task force focused on addressing RV encampments and finding housing solutions for RV residents. The task force developed an internal report with a plan to tackle the issue, which included several recommendations for changes in state policy. One such proposal was to allow a larger number of impounded RVs to be dismantled and recycled rather than entering a lien sale.

AB 647 clarifies that the authority created under AB 630 may be utilized by local agencies within Los Angeles and Alameda Counties. It also amends AB 630's

sunset date of January 1, 2030, to January 1, 2032, to maintain the pilot program's intended implementation time of 5 years.

6. Argument in Opposition

According to a large coalition of housing and civil and criminal justice organizations, writing together:

When it was introduced, AB 630 was a statewide program. But given concerns raised by opponents, including Californians who would be at risk of losing their RVs under the policy, the Legislature limited this new pilot in scope, allowing Los Angeles and Alameda Counties to implement and evaluate its impacts. Yet before the new pilot has even begun, AB 647 seeks to expand it from two jurisdictions to more than a hundred. Los Angeles County alone contains eighty-eight separate cities; Alameda County includes fourteen separate cities. This significant change will greatly expand the risk of harm imposed on people who are relying on RVs for a place to live.

Supporters of AB 647 claim that the pilot would only apply to “abandoned” vehicles and therefore would not affect RV residents. This assertion is not credible. In part, this is because the term “abandoned recreational vehicles” is not defined in the bill language, and can be easily manipulated to enable cities to tow and destroy RVs used as places to live. For example, many vehicle residents must leave their RVs for work, hospital stays, visiting relatives, doing errands, or other reasons—activities that should not come with the risk of losing their RVs. Yet, many Los Angeles vehicle residents have reported that their RVs have been towed and dismantled while they were away.

AB 647 threatens the safety and wellbeing of vehicle residents by significantly expanding a policy already poised to cause considerable harm. In 2023, 39% of individuals experiencing houselessness in Los Angeles County lived in vehicles. In Alameda County, more than half of all unsheltered people lived in their vehicles in 2024. As long as California and its local governments fail to provide enough affordable housing, many residents priced out of market-rate housing rely on their vehicles for safety. It is not surprising that many community members report that their vehicles provide “safer and more stable lodging than living in public spaces such as sidewalks, underpasses, or parks.” Vehicles can be “locked to secure one’s belongings [...] and offer a way to reach jobs, schools, and services.” [...]

AB 647 puts the RVs of community members at increased risk of seizure and destruction, disproportionately impacting vulnerable people, including children and families. A 2022 UCLA study found that “the largest predictor of someone living in a vehicle was being in a household with children.” In Los Angeles, 44% of unhoused women report domestic violence as the primary cause of their homelessness. For these survivors, a locked RV provides a vital sense of safety that a sidewalk cannot. [...]

Towing and disposing of vehicular homes across all jurisdictions in Los Angeles and Alameda Counties is a costly practice that does nothing to solve the housing

affordability and houselessness crisis; it will only exacerbate it, harming countless Californians in the process. It is also cruel and immoral. As noted by Kim Reeder, a former vehicle resident in Los Angeles, “Once you lose your home it feels like you lose your property rights.” Taking away a person's shelter exposes them to violence, extreme weather, and premature death. All Californians deserve to be treated with dignity, respect, and care – especially those most impacted by a system that fails to ensure that everyone has access to a home that is safe, permanent, and affordable.

-- END --