



CALIFORNIA STATE SENATOR

**Jesse Arreguín**

REPRESENTING SENATE DISTRICT 07

## SB 1218 – Delinquent Illegal Dumping Citations

### SUMMARY

Senate Bill 1218 establishes an accountability mechanism for illegal dumping by requiring the California Department of Motor Vehicles to refuse to renew the registration of a vehicle if the registered owner has outstanding illegal dumping fines. This legislation focuses on those businesses and individuals who are deliberately dumping waste in California's streets and public spaces, polluting our waterways and creating public health impacts.

### BACKGROUND

Illegal dumping is the unlawful disposal of large waste items such as furniture, appliances, construction debris, and household trash that continues to plague California communities up and down our state.

Illegal dumping is a persistent public health, environmental, and quality-of-life crisis in Oakland and across California. Abandoned waste attracts additional dumping, creates fire hazards, blocks sidewalks, harms local businesses, and disproportionately impacts low-income communities and communities of color. Despite significant investments in cleanup, including expanded weekend staffing, increased bulky pickup services, and aggressive pursuit of grant funding, enforcement remains the critical missing component.

California Penal Code Section 374.3 prohibits the dumping of waste or construction material on public streets, spaces or property, and allows for the imposition of penalties for individuals convicted of dumping.

Currently in Oakland, illegal dumping citations are routinely ignored and collection rates for administrative citations remain unacceptably low. Cities across our State lack a meaningful enforcement tool to ensure compliance, and repeat offenders face little deterrent. Without a predictable consequence, there is a lack

of accountability, and individuals may continue to dump waste and debris impacting the safety of neighborhoods.

### PROBLEM

Current efforts at cleanup and prevention remain costly and ineffective without stronger enforcement mechanisms and collection tools. In other words, those that are apathetic enough to toss their waste in someone else's neighborhood are not going to pay a citation.

Between 2021 and 2024, Oakland issued nearly 3,000 illegal dumping citations totaling about \$1.3 million in fines. However, the city has collected only about \$109,000 which is roughly 11% of total fines issued. Last year, Oakland received over 25,000 calls reporting illegal dumping. As a result, Oakland crews removed 15 million pounds of trash.<sup>1</sup> When the city routinely cleans up these hotspot areas, it sends a signal to perpetrators that their actions do not have consequences and that their dumping will be addressed by the city.

### SOLUTION

SB 1218 provides a straightforward and proven solution. The bill would amend the California Vehicle Code to require payment or resolution of illegal dumping fines before DMV vehicle registration can be completed. This aligns with an existing enforcement mechanism already in place for unpaid parking citations.

Under the proposed framework, a city issues an administrative citation for illegal dumping linked to a vehicle. If the citation remains unpaid or unresolved, the fine is transmitted through existing DMV registration hold processes. The offending individual's vehicle registration then cannot be completed until the fine is paid or otherwise resolved.

<sup>1</sup> [Illegal dumpers face big fines in Oakland, but they rarely have to pay](#)

By establishing a meaningful consequence for unpaid citations, SB 1218 will deter repeat illegal dumping, improve compliance, and support cleaner and safer neighborhoods.

**CONTACT**

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**SUPPORT**

The Honorable Barbara Lee, Mayor, City of Oakland (Sponsor)