



City of Detroit
CITY COUNCIL

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
September 22, 2006

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**COUNCIL PRESIDENT KEN COCKREL, JR. STATEMENT REGARDING
INTRODUCTION OF SCRAP METAL AND PROCESSING ORDINANCES**

Today the Detroit City Council voted to introduce two ordinances intended to curb the plague of scrap metal thefts in our city.

I wholeheartedly support the spirit of these ordinances. Thefts of copper wiring from street lights, air conditioning units, lighting fixtures, and other metals have climbed to what is widely believed to be an all time high. I have, myself, had gutters stolen from my garage recently.

However, I voted “no” on the introduction of these ordinances. This is primarily because the ordinances have yet to be thoroughly reviewed by the city’s Law Department, which is customary in council’s ordinance approval process. Furthermore, the ordinances have also not been reviewed either by the Police or Building Safety and Engineering Departments. Since these departments will be directly involved in enforcement, their input is critical prior to introduction of the ordinance.

This leads to my second concern. Because the input of these departments may lead to substantive changes in the ordinance language, these changes would force the Council to have to re-introduce the ordinance so that notice of these changes can be given to the public. While this is a critical public safety issue, I believe it makes sense to address the potential need for language changes on the front end rather than after the fact.

Based on a cursory review of the ordinances, the Law Department has already said it has identified some “legal problems.”

When one considers this, the need to ensure that these ordinances are well-crafted and pass legal muster becomes paramount.