



April 4, 2024

The Honorable Kevin McCarty  
Chair, Assembly Committee on Public Safety  
1020 N Street, Room 111  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Aisha Wahab  
Chair, Senate Public Safety Committee  
1020 N Street, Room 545  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Retail Theft Aggregation and Multi-Jurisdictional Legislation**

Dear Assemblymember McCarty and Senator Wahab,

One of the League of California Cities' (Cal Cities) top advocacy priorities is to address crime and retail theft, organized retail theft and shoplifting. Our organization is pleased that both houses of the Legislature have made this issue a priority in 2024. As such, Cal Cities would like to identify a few bills that we believe would help to address the issue of aggregating multiple retail theft offenses across a multi-jurisdictional area.

As you may know, retail theft continues to be a problem in nearly all California communities. For example, commercial burglary is at the highest rate since 2008. In fact, according to the PPIC, commercial burglary increased statewide since 2020, especially in larger counties with an increase of 13% among 14 of the 15 largest counties. To address rising theft, city officials need additional tools to reduce crime and improve the safety of their neighborhoods.

It has become common for offenders to try to avoid higher charges, such as grand theft, by stealing small amounts of items they know are under \$950 across several retail businesses. Current law provides that multiple thefts can be aggregated to one charge if these incidents can be proven to be "one intention, one general impulse, and one plan." Unfortunately, this law is limited in scope and Cal Cities strongly believes it needs strengthening.

Improved aggregation laws for multiple incidents of theft will not be helpful without active prosecution of cases across several jurisdictions. Expanding coordination and abilities of District Attorneys to work together to prosecute theft offenses that occur in several counties will ensure offenders are held accountable.



Therefore, we support the following bills:

AB 1779 (Irwin) Theft: Jurisdiction.  
(As Amended on 3/11/2024)

AB 1794 (McCarty) Crimes: Larceny  
(As Amended on 4/1/2024)

These bills propose several methods of ensuring and clarifying the process of multi-jurisdictional prosecution as well as aggregation of multiple theft incidents with several victims.

While these individual bills are important in order to continue to make progress on retail theft, these bills are only one part of a comprehensive solution that needs to include prevention, enforcement, and supervision. Cal Cities is part of a larger coalition of business, labor, law enforcement and local governments trying to address the increase in retail theft that is impacting so many Californians. Addressing aggregation of multiple theft offenses and cross-county prosecution of offenses are some of the methods that can help solve this growing problem, however additional changes are needed in order to make our communities safer.

For these reasons, Cal Cities **supports the bills listed above.** If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me at [jvoorhis@calcities.org](mailto:jvoorhis@calcities.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jolena Voorhis", is written over a faint blue line.

Jolena Voorhis  
Legislative Affairs, Lobbyist

cc: The Honorable Jacqui Irwin  
The Honorable Kevin McCarty  
Members, Assembly Public Safety Committee  
Members, Senate Public Safety Committee  
Sandy Uribe, Chief Counsel, Assembly Public Safety Committee  
Gary Olson, Consultant, Republican Caucus  
Mary Kennedy, Chief Counsel, Senate Public Safety  
Eric Csizmar, Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus