Parliament has approved a measure in a draft road traffic law that allows owners of vehicles seized for traffic-related offenses to sell their vehicles privately to settle outstanding fines before the state auctions them.

The provision, included in Article 22 of the draft legislation, requires that vehicle owners be notified once a vehicle is seized. Owners may then sell the vehicle at a price they agree on, provided the proceeds cover the fines imposed.

Hon. Hope Gasatura Tumukunde, chairperson of Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Security, said the measure was intended to protect vehicle owners and help them recover some of the value of their property.

"Allowing an owner to sell their vehicle and pay the fines does not harm the state," Gasatura said. "It gives the owner a chance to recover financially, and potentially retain some money after settling the obligations."

Some lawmakers questioned whether allowing owners to sell their vehicles could result in losses if the sale price fell short of the fines owed. MP Valens Muhakwa raised concerns about potential revenue loss for the government.

Infrastructure Minister Dr. Jimmy Gasore said the bill was designed to prevent unnecessary penalties, such as the seizure of additional property, and to avoid placing the state in a position of loss.

"It is standard practice that unpaid fines should not lead to the seizure of other personal property like land or houses," Gasore said. "That is why the focus is on the vehicle itself."

The law also lays out the process for vehicle impoundment. Vehicles may be seized if they are abandoned, if the driver is not located, if inspection reveals safety issues, if the vehicle is involved in a fatal accident, or if the driver's blood alcohol level exceeds the legal limit. Seizures are carried out by the head of the road safety department or an authorized officer, and a report is issued to the vehicle owner.

The maximum impoundment period is three months. If the vehicle is not recovered within that time, it may be sold at auction or destroyed, with proceeds applied first to outstanding fines and costs. Any remaining funds are deposited in a designated account for the owner or their legal representative to claim.

The bill, part of broader reforms to improve road safety, reflects Parliament's effort

to balance enforcement with fairness for vehicle owners.