

Don't fight regional agencies

Two Oakland County agencies are pondering a stern warning from Gov. William Milliken against fighting or abandoning regional agencies.

"Now is not the time to consider withdrawing from SEMCOG (the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments) because you disagree with the new way the SEMTA (Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority) board will be appointed," Milliken said in comments aimed at the Oakland County Board of Commissioners.

"Now is not the time to try to do away with SEMTA and attempt to create other agencies or to fractionalize responsibility for public transportation in this region because of disagreements over specific policies," he said to the Oakland County Road Commission.

Milliken spoke last week at the annual meeting of SEMCOG's general assembly.

MILLIKEN ADMITTED "there will surely be disagreements—sometimes bitter disagreements. But we must work together because they are common problems which require a common solution."

Oakland County has been strongly supportive of SEMCOG for most of the time since the seven-county voluntary association was formed in 1969.

But many commissioners were angered when the Michigan Legislature—at the urging of Milliken and Detroit Mayor Coleman Young—stripped away SEMCOG's power to appoint SEMTA board members and gave it to nearly everyone except Oakland County. The county board has been pondering a resolution to withdraw from SEMCOG. Such a move, if taken, would severely cripple SEMTA's regional planning efforts because Oakland is one of the most populous members and largest dues contributors.

Milliken's slap at the road commission was based on that group's drawing up and trying to sell a rival to SEMTA's rapid transit plan. Road Commission Managing Director John Grubba has even suggested SEMTA be stripped of its rapid transit powers and that they be given to the road commissions of Oakland, Wayne and Macomb counties.

MILLIKEN ALSO acknowledged many local persons and SEMCOG members were angry at the restructuring of the SEMTA board, a change which took away most of SEMCOG's appointment powers and gave them to the City of Detroit and the major county boards except Oakland's.

"I'm aware of the dissension this ac-

tion caused," said Milliken, "and I am hopeful the argument over how the SEMTA board should be appointed does not injure our cooperative efforts."

"I also hope we see a board evolving which will remain free from excessive concern with parochial issues and can maintain a regionwide program."

"The SEMTA program must be planned for on a basis larger than a countywide basis or the individual community level. Its ultimate decisions must be made keeping in mind how they will affect the overall region."

THE GOVERNOR, who is considering seeking a third full term in 1978, got in plugs for some of his other legislative proposals:

•Transportation package—"It is a

total package which would help meet the needs of all parts of the state. It would increase funds for city and village streets by \$24.4 million annually and would increase funds for county roads by \$42.4 million each year. It would provide the state backing necessary for development of the public transportation system to serve southeast Michigan."

•Tax growth sharing, an unpopular proposal in most growing suburbs—"We must understand we cannot turn our backs on the cities because the problems they have today are the problems we will have tomorrow. Already many of the older metropolitan areas that surround the urban cores are beginning to show the same symptoms of urban decay of the core areas. The same is true of the suburbs. I ask for your support of this concept based on an enlightened self-interest."

Eco Center gets U.S. cash

Upland Hills Ecological Awareness Center has been awarded a \$15,000 grant from the U.S. Energy Research and Development Administration (ERDA) and a \$10,000 donation from the Motor City Consumer's Co-op, a UAW-affiliated organization, to purchase building materials for the construction of a small solar-heated and wind-powered building to be erected during the summer of 1977 at the center's location in Oxford.

The building design employs many energy-conscious features such as a soil road for extra insulation and thermal mass, earth berms, semi-underground construction, maximum south-

ern exposure for direct solar heat gain during winter, movable insulating panels over windows and means for natural ventilation.

Designed by Sunstructures, Inc. of Ann Arbor and Probe Inc. of Troy, the building will be constructed of local materials either available on site—stone, sod, and wood—or manufactured in the area.

When completed in early 1978, the center will be open to the public and will provide space for films, slide presentations, workshops, and exhibits on energy related issues.

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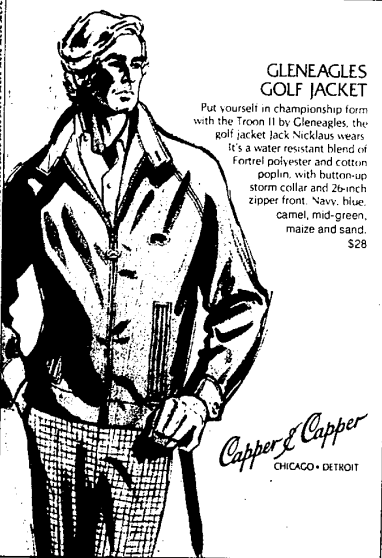
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