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SEMTA raps, spending curb bill

Oakland County commissioners are opposing a state senate bill that would curb the way the Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority allocates its funds between capital and operating costs.

The board voted 17-7 at its May 18 meeting to oppose SB 1483, offered by Sens. James DeSana (D-Wyandotte), David Plawecki (D-Dearborn Heights) and R. Robert Goske (R-Northville). If enacted, the bill would prohibit SEMTA from using funds from the tri \$2.50 vehicle registration tax and \$6 title transfer tax for operating purposes.

Those taxes were passed in 1976 with the idea they would be the state-local share of capital funds to improve public transportation. The tax law was so worded, however, that it allows SEMTA to use the funds for either operations or capital.

THE TAXES raise about \$12.5 million, said Henry M. Hogan, an Oakland County member of the SEMTA board. Of that, \$10 million is being allocated for capital improvements. The SEMTA board is scheduled to decide July 25 what mode of rapid transit—if any—to construct.

If SEMTA cannot use \$2.5 million for operations, Hogan said, "we can either 1) cut services to Oakland County and the suburbs or 2) ask for \$2.5 million from the state general fund."

Any cuts in services could not be applied to Detroit's Department of Transportation, which is funded separately by the state and federal governments.

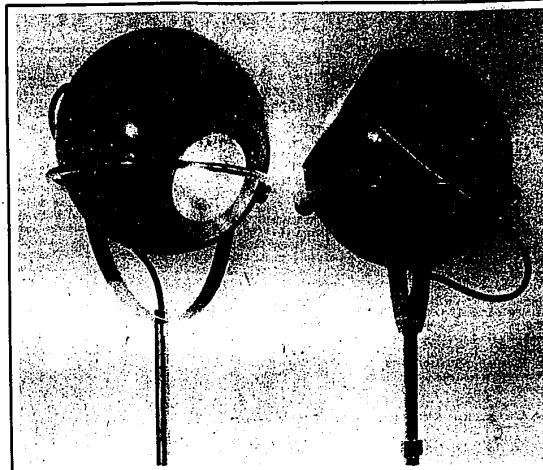
The county board's resolution opposed SB 1483 on the ground the funds are "needed to maintain present levels of services."

SUPPORTING the pro-SEMTA resolu-

tion were local commissioners Paul Kasper (R-Bloomfield Hills), Robert McConnell (R-Farmington Hills), John McDonald (R-Farmington), Lillian Moffitt (R-Bloomfield), Joseph Montante (R-Orchard Lake), Ralph Morley (R-Birmingham), Dennis Murphy (R-Novi), Robert Page (R-Birmingham), Alex Perinoff (D-Southfield), Larry Pernick (D-Southfield) and John Peterson (R-Avon).

Opposed was Henry Hoot (R-Troy). The opposition was led by James E. Lanni (R-Royal Oak), who recently led the unsuccessful attempt to withdraw Oakland County from SEMTA. Lanni argued the bill would "prevent money from being eaten up by SEMTA operations."

Perinoff countered, "The ones in favor of this feel we should get out of SEMTA. I feel we live in a community. SEMTA is a vital organization."



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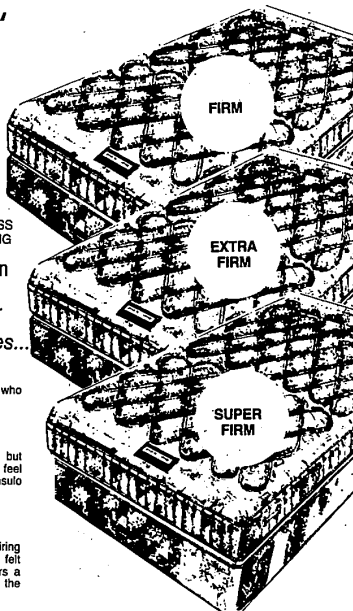
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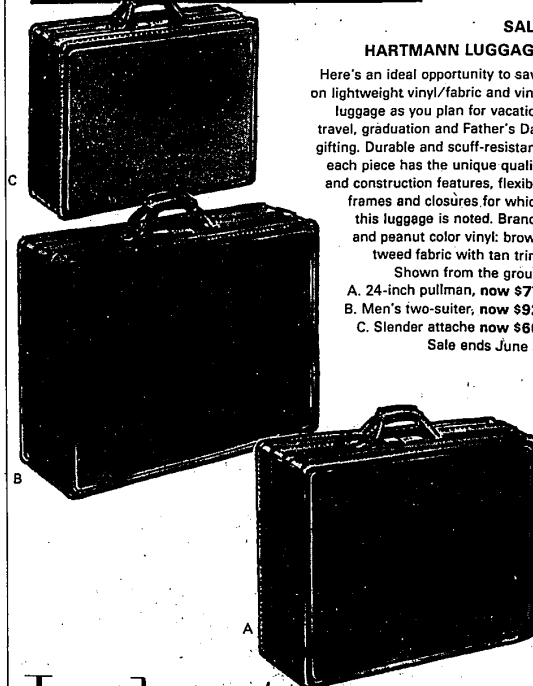
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