

# House explodes self-help road fee bill 2-1

By Tim Richard  
staff writer

State lawmakers Tuesday dynamited a key building block in suburban's attempt to fund new local road construction.

The House of Representatives bombed, 2-1, enabling legislation that would have given counties with high economic growth the power to levy "impact fees" on developers of commercial, industrial and apartment projects.

"I'm very disappointed," said John Grubba, managing director of the Oakland County Road Commission. He has been selling the idea since returning from a national convention 1 1/2 years ago.

"We intend to pursue it. It took six times in South Carolina," Grubba said.

BUT REP. MAXINE BERNAN, D-Southfield, the bill's sponsor, was less optimistic about trying again after the 63-34 defeat.

"I have other bills. I don't know if I have time" to pursue reconsideration, the second-term lawmaker said.



Rep. Maxine Berman  
other bills to work on

Why did an essentially self-help bill for Wayne, Oakland, Macomb, Genesee and Kent counties bomb nearly 2-1?

Pressure from house builders, politics and lack of enthusiasm from Gov. James Blanchard's administration seemed to be the answers.

"If Oakland folks don't convince Republicans..."

Democrat Berman began, noting few Republicans outside the Oakland delegation supported her House Bill 4722. Here's how area representatives voted:

Democrats for: Justine Barus of Westland, Bernma of Southfield, James Kosteva of Canton, Wilfred Webb of Hazel Park.

Democrats against: John Bennett of Redford Township.

Democrat absent: William Keith of Garden City.

Republicans for: W.V. Brotherton of Farmington, Mat Dunaskiss of Lake Orion, David Honigman of West Bloomfield, Judith Miller of Birmingham and Gordon Sparks of Troy — all Oakland.

Republicans against: Lyn Bankes of Livonia, Gerald Law of Plymouth

Township — both Wayne.

GROUPS BACKING the bill were the Michigan Municipal League and many commercial-industrial developers.

Opposed were the Michigan Association of Homebuilders and many residential real estate firms, whose argument was summed up by Redford's Bennett:

"They say impact fees will add 1-2 percent to the price of a house. Use the 2 percent figure 'cause that's more likely. That will add \$1,600 to the price of an \$80,000 home."

"About 80 percent of people can't qualify for purchase (of new homes). This will disqualify many prospective buyers. There will be stagnation, less housing, less jobs."

Berman countered it would be bet-

ter to amortize the fee into a 30-year mortgage than to charge the public higher taxes.

"We can't have development without roads," she said. "It (impact fees) isn't a new and off-the-wall idea. It's been used elsewhere."

But like many critics of the bill Berman said in a corridor interview she prefers a statewide gasoline tax increase — a measure Gov. Blanchard opposes.

"It would be a true user fee. Tourists would be paying it. But we didn't have that option today," she said.

THE BILL, if enacted, would have allowed county road authorities to prepare a five-year plan designating a development district. The elected county board of commissioners would have to approve the fees un-

der an amendment sponsored by Rep. Sparks of Troy.

Almost all discussion of the idea had been in terms of industrial, commercial, office and hotel areas where vast amounts of job-related traffic are generated on two-lane county roads.

Fees could have been applied only to new projects, not existing ones.

One supporter was Ken Strobel, vice president of Bellemead Development Corp., a national firm located in Troy. "A real threat to the state's growth and economic stability," he wrote to lawmakers, "is traffic gridlock."

He said his firm voluntarily committed \$9 million toward a \$12 million road improvement project in Troy. "Traffic gridlock will drive customers away, as it did in Houston," Strobel warned.

## 65 speed bill has 'ticket tax'

A House-passed 65 mph freeway speed limit bill faces an uncertain future in the Michigan Senate because it contains the controversial \$5 "ticket tax."

"It makes no sense to link the number of tickets to the number of police officers," objected Rep. M.L. Mickey Knight, R-Muskegon.

He echoed arguments of Republican senators who refused to adopt Gov. James J. Blanchard's proposed \$5 surcharge on all tickets for moving violations as a method of raising revenue to hire more state police troopers.

BUT A BEARY majority of the House, which has voted on various forms of the bill six times, was eager Tuesday to get the issue out of the way.

The bill was adopted 72-34 and sent back to the Senate for concurrence on the ticket tax.

Area representatives supporting it were: Democrat Justine Barus of Westland, James Kosteva of Canton and Wilfred Webb of Hazel Park; and Republicans Lyn Bankes of Livonia, W.V. Brotherton of Farmington, Mat Dunaskiss of Lake Orion, David Honigman of West Bloom-

field, Gerald Law of Plymouth Township, Judith Miller of Birmingham and Gordon Sparks of Troy.

Opposed were Democrats John Bennett of Redford and Maxine Berman of Southfield, neither of whom spoke during floor debate. Absent was William Keith, D-Garden City.

THE BILL was repaired from last week, when metropolitan area lawmakers charged it discriminated against their areas in the areas of penalty points.

"The compromise will set the same penalties for driving over the

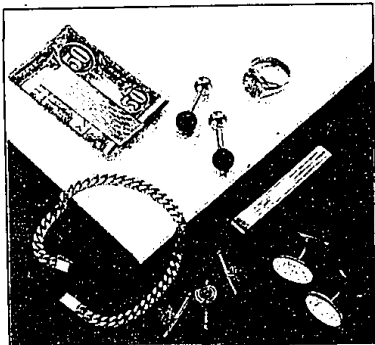
speed limit regardless of whether the speed limit is 55 or 65," said Democratic floor leader Lewis Dodak of Montrose.

The new schedule of violations, points and minimum fines is:

- \$6-60 mph — zero points, \$10 minimum fine.
- 61-70, one point, \$20.
- 71-80, two points, \$30.
- 81-85, three points, \$40.
- 86 and up, four points, \$50.

The higher speed limit will apply to only 720 miles of rural interstate freeways of Michigan's 1,700 miles of limited access highways, Dodak said. Trucks and buses still will be limited to 55 mph.

THE "TICKET TAX" is expected to yield \$6 million — 1.2 million tickets issued in 1986 times \$5 each.



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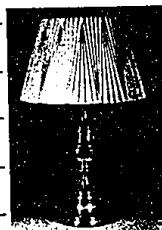
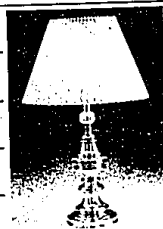
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