

SEMOG: Use bonds for environment

By Tim Richard
staff writer

Local officials told state lawmakers they want the entire \$800 million proposed bond issue used for environmental programs — with nothing diverted into economic development.

The general assembly of the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments dropped the words "as much as possible" and asked that "the total bond issue" be used for environmental protection.

"There's a really strong environmental concern out there. I'm surprised," said John Amberger, executive director of SEMOG, a seven-county planning agency with about 130 member governments.

SEMOG delegates, meeting Thursday in Dearborn, amended a more softly worded resolution at the insistence of Westland councilman Charles Pickering and Oak Park city manager Aaron Marsh.

THE STATE Senate was scheduled to begin work late Thursday on a package of six bills to put the bond

issue on the Nov. 8 ballot.

But minority leader Art Miller, D-Warren, said "many members had other commitments in their districts," citing the Pistons-Lakers basketball playoff game in the Pontiac Silverdome. He said Democrats would be leaving at 5 p.m.

Majority floor leader Phil Arthurs, R-Whitehall, wanted to run the session to at least 6 p.m., taking up the bond issue after disposing of appropriations bills. Instead, the bond issue will be taken up Tuesday.

Gov. Blanchard proposed the bond issue in his "state of the state" address, saying existing revenues now used for expiring bonds could be used to pay off a new issue. Total cost, including interest on an \$800 million bond issue, would be \$1.63 billion over 20 years.

But Blanchard threw lawmakers and SEMOG officials into a tizzy when his detailed proposal asked money for economic development, too.

SEMOG's resolution said, "If monies are to be allocated to eco-

nomic development activities, they should be limited to . . . environmental concerns" such as sewers for new industry.

THE SENATE Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs Committee, chaired by Vern Ehlers, R-Grand Rapids, has split the plan into two separate questions for voters:

• A \$700 million bond issue for environmental work. This would include \$450 million for cleanup of contaminated sites, \$175 million for solid waste (trash) management, \$50 million "seed money" for a state wastewater treatment revolving

loan fund, and \$25 million for Michigan's participation in a regional Great Lakes protection fund.

• A \$100 million recreation bond issue — with \$70 million going to the state Department of Natural Resources for a five-year capital outlay plan and \$30 million for local projects.

The local projects would require a 25 percent match of funds, translating the \$30 million in state money into \$40 million in total local parks work.

SEMOG wants the recreation money split 50-50 between DNR and local units rather than 70-30.

A related bill proposed by Ehlers would impose a \$2-per-ton surcharge on trash disposal and use the \$20 million revenue for repayment of the environmental bonds.

SEMOG TOOK no position on the trash tax, but many local officials oppose it.

In other business, the SEMOG general assembly:

• Re-elected Farmington Hills Mayor JoAnn (Jody) Soronen to the board of the Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority, on which she has served since 1982.

"If the ship goes down," said Sor-

onen, "I want to go with it. But reports of its demise are at least exaggerated." She represents Oakland County.

• Re-elected Thomas J. Fegan, Washtenaw County planning director, to the SEMTA board.

• Picked the first woman chairperson in SEMOG's 20-year history — Nancy Davis, supervisor of Ann Arbor Township.

• Elected five vice chairs representing various SEMOG blocs, including Bloomfield Township supervisor Fred Korzon and Wayne County commissioner Milton Mack, D-Wayne.

County panel backs recycling

Cutting the flow of solid waste to Oakland County's overburdened landfills is a priority for officials, who announced plans to develop a comprehensive, countywide recycling strategy.

"We are faced with the dilemma of having no place to put the 3,000 tons of trash we generate daily in this county," said Oakland County Executive Daniel Murphy. "We have less than six years of landfill space left."

Waste reduction, recycling and composting techniques would reduce the amount of materials needing landfilling by 20 percent or more. Recycling has proven to be a cost-effective and safe alternative to land disposal, especially when avoided

collection and disposal costs are considered, he said.

THE COUNTY, upon the recommendation of the Solid Waste Planning Committee, has hired a subconsultant, Resource Recycling Systems of Ann Arbor, to begin a preliminary design for a comprehensive waste reduction program.

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The Winklers Circle column was created to address questions on the Michigan Lottery and its games. Following are a few of those most frequently asked of Lottery personnel.

Q: How are Super Lotto Jackpot amounts determined?

A: Like other parimutuel games, Super Lotto prize pools are based on the amount played for each drawing. The 25 cents of every sales dollar assigned to the jackpot prize pool forms an investment in which all the principal and interest combine to pay winners a much larger total over a 20-year period. Players who match five of the winning numbers share the second prize pool composed of 8 cents of each dollar spent on tickets. The third prize pool, shared by all who match four numbers, is paid from 11 cents of each dollar. Super Lotto has a minimum jackpot of \$1.5 million. A "rollover" — when no one matches all six winning numbers — keeps the jackpot growing until it is won.

Q: What happens if a winner dies before collecting the full prize amount?

A: Payments continue to be paid to the estate of the deceased until the full amount of the prize is awarded. This is true of \$1,000-a-week-for-life prizes in past instant games which guaranteed payment of at least \$1 million.

Q: How many prizes go unclaimed and what happens to this money?

A: In an average year, unclaimed prizes represent about one percent of sales revenue. In the past fiscal year, they totaled about \$11.6 million. Primarily made up of small prizes, this money is added to Lottery net revenues which are all assigned to the state School Aid Fund to help support K-12 education.

Q: How much are Lottery retailers paid?

A: Lottery retailers earn a 6% sales commission on every ticket sold and receive a 2% redemption commission for their payment of prizes worth up to \$600.

Q: Are Lottery drawing machines and the computer connected?

A: Similar to equipment used in other lotteries, the drawing machines used for Daily games and Super Lotto drawings are specially designed to make a random selection of numbers. They operate completely independent of the Lottery's computer system. The main computer records wagers in the games and can verify winning tickets only after the drawing is completed and winning numbers are fed into it. Equipment checks are made before and after each drawing. All are supervised by both a Lottery drawing manager and an independent auditor, and videotaped as a matter of public record.

If you have a question not yet covered in these monthly columns, send it to "Winklers Circle," Michigan Lottery, P.O. Box 36077, Lansing, MI 48909.

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