

Crisis resolved

Legislators approve incinerator ash bill

By Tim Richard
staff writer

State Sen. Vern Ehlers of Grand Rapids and Rep. Ken Sikkema of Grandville are better known to western Michigan political buffs than to metro residents.

But these two Republican lawmakers, with reputations as environmentalists, helped convince wavering lawmakers to pass a bill resolving the state incinerator ash crisis.

"I'm not an expert," said Rep. Gerald Law, R-Plymouth, who said he listened to Sikkema, a member of the conservation and forestry committees. "People who know a lot about the environment said it (House Bill 4311) wasn't bad. Burning it is better than burying it."

The bill requires an intermediate form of landfill for municipal incinerators — something less costly than toxic landfills. It signed by Gov. James Blanchard, the law would take effect immediately.

THE CRISIS arose when officials in Jackson County, Detroit and the east side suburbs ran afoul of the state Department of Natural Resources.

DNR said their trash incinerators contained enough toxics that the ash should be disposed of in toxic landfills — many times more expensive than standard landfills.

Rep. Michael Griffin, D-Jackson, sponsored a bill to allow an intermediate type known as a "monofill." When his bill flew silently through the House late in March, environmentalists rallied on the State Capitol steps and put heat on Ehlers, chair of the Senate natural resources committee and himself holding a doctorate in physics.

Ehlers made a number of amendments — enough to win 23-13 passage in the Senate and 79-22 House concurrence.

The second House vote gave the measure a bigger majority than the earlier.

Despite their apparent compromise, many suburban lawmakers opposed the measure.

Yes — William Faust, D-Westland, and Richard Fessler, R-Commerce.

No — Doug Cruce, R-Troy, Jack Faxon, D-Farmington Hills, Robert Geake, R-Northville, and George Hart, D-Deerborn.

Excused absence — Rudy Nichols, R-Waterford.

"There's a double standard. Everything is permissible in Detroit," said Hart, whose district includes Garden City. "I listened to my communities," said Hart, who voted no.

Geake voted no because "the standards for potentially toxic landfill material were substantially weakened."

"It opened them up to hazardous substances," said Faxon, another no vote.

But Fessler said he had been approached by representatives of Oakland County Executive Daniel T. Murphy, who told him they were concerned that Oakland's incinerator project could be delayed without it. The county has let a contract on the first of three incinerators to burn 1,500 tons daily of trash.

THE HOUSE vote was:

Yes — Democrat James Kosteva of Canton; Republicans Law, Jan Dolan of Farmington Hills and Gordon Sparks of Troy.

No — Democrats Justice Burns of Westland, John Bennett of Redford, Maxine Berman of Southfield, William Keith of Garden City and Wilfred Webb of Hazel Park; Republicans Lyn Bankes of Livonia, Mat Dunaskis of Lake Orion, David Honigman of West Bloomfield and Judy Miller of Birmingham.

"We don't need a special category," said Miller.

"I voted with the environmentalists," said Bankes, acknowledging a flood of organized mail opposing the bill. "I want to leave the world safe for my grandchild," said Bankes, whose son John expects to be a father around Christmas.

But Kosteva said the bill "provides environmental protection that are equal to those of hazardous waste regulations."

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get the whole ream of materials," said Dolan, a freshman serving with Sikkema on the conservation committee.

A yes vote, Dolan said monofills would have a new type of liner that would adequately control any toxic materials.

She announced support of bills that would require separation of batteries, chief sources of toxic lead and cadmium in landfills. Sen. Ehlers is sponsor of such a bill.

"We have to have source separation. We have to have them all," said Dolan.

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around Oakland

U-M head librarian featured

The Oakland County Genealogical Society hosts Barbara Snow, the chief circulation librarian at the University of Michigan Law Library, and member of the Wash-tonaw County Genealogical Society. Snow will speak on "Using the University of Michigan Libraries For Your Genealogical Research."

Tuesday, June 6, in the Rotary Room of the Baldwin Public Library in Birmingham. The library is at 300 W. Merrill, which is two blocks south of Maple (15 Mile Road) and two blocks east of Southfield Road.

The public is invited. For more information, contact Lois Ellis at 751-5224.

Common Ground needs you

Common Ground, Oakland County's 24-hour crisis center, needs volunteers to provide telephone orientation session at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, June 7, at Common Ground, 751 Hendrie Blvd., Royal Oak. No appointment is necessary. For further information, call Donna Reymann at 543-3050.

Excellent training is provided. Interested people may attend an orientation session at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, June 7, at Common Ground, 751 Hendrie Blvd., Royal Oak. No appointment is necessary. For further information, call Donna Reymann at 543-3050.

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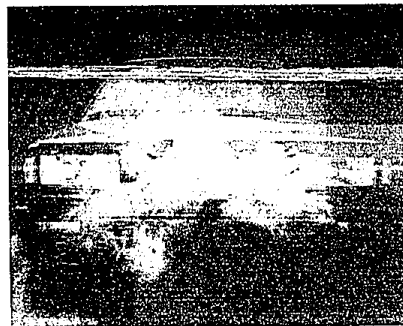
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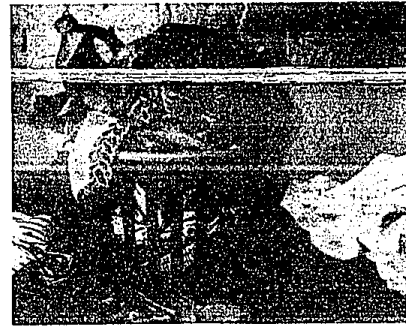
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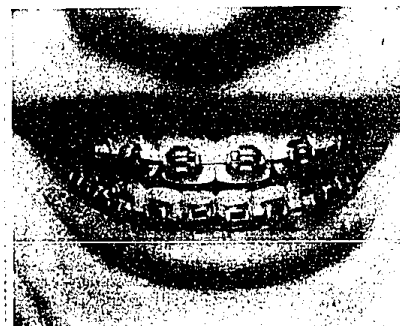
Nowadays, you're training just so you'll have the wind to blow out next year's candles.



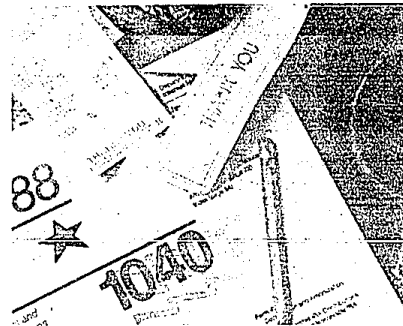
You've come to accept that every now and then your car needs to let off steam, too.



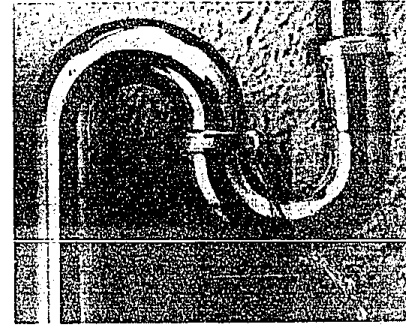
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