

## Solid Waste Poses Next Crisis

It took a crisis to bring energy shortages to the public's attention and to spur some action.

And it will probably take another crisis to bring solid waste disposal problems to the forefront.

But groups are busy at both the state and regional levels attacking the solid waste problems and are attempting to keep them from mounting to crisis level.

At the state level, Sen. Carl Pursell (R-Plymouth) and three colleagues have offered a plan for a statewide authority to "plan, construct, finance and operate" disposal facilities.

At the regional level, a committee within the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments is working on both short and long range plans to solve waste disposal problems in Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, St. Clair, Washtenaw and Wayne Counties.

Chaired by Arch Vallier, a retired engineer from Plymouth, the committee is studying Pursell's plan and eventually hopes to recommend endorsement and support by SEMCOG.

Originally, the committee considered seeking legislation to govern the regional area but has decided to sup-

port a statewide plan.

"I think that politically and practically, it is better to go for a statewide bill which will give the regions the right to do certain jobs," Vallier said.

Vallier says he'd like to see Pursell's bill amended before SEMCOG joins the push for the legislation.

Rather than having the state authority control disposal facilities, Vallier says regions should do it with the state stepping in only if the regions don't meet their obligations.

A longtime advocate of local rights, Vallier wants to

"protect the rights of towns and counties" and thus prefers "permissive" legislation.

"There's no question in my mind that if they don't do it themselves, the state will have to step in and do it," Vallier says.

The bill would use private enterprise to implement a solid waste management plan, according to Pursell.

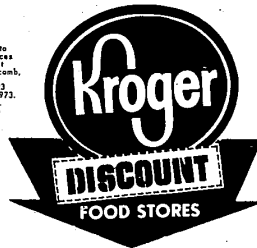
Vallier says the SEMCOG task force will comb over the bill and recommend changes. He hopes that it can bring the bill before SEMCOG's general assembly in January for support.

In the meantime, Vallier would like to see a surge in interest in solid waste problems.

"But it's like the energy crisis — it has to be on you before you'll do anything about it," he says.

The day a Livonian carries out his trash in the morning only to return and find it sitting on the curb in the evening, the impact of solid waste problems might hit a responsive cord.

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