GOP seeks end to tailpipe emissions law

By Tim Richard
staff writer

At least three Republican state senators want an end to the 1980 law requiring vehicle emissions tests.

They reported a bill out of the Senate Judiciary Committee last week, over the objections of two Democrats, the Commerce Department and two auto companies, to kill the emissions test law.

"This sunsets it on Dec. 31, 1987," said Sen. Rudy Nichols, R-Waterford, author of the bill and chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee. "This is what the Legislature intended to do."

What makes his bill necessary, he said, is that Attorney General Frank Kelley found a legal defect in the title of the original law that allows the state to continue enforcing the law beyond the end-of-1987 sunset date.

OPPONENTS FEAR the federal government will use the 1972 Clean Air Act to stop industrial building in southeastern Michigan if the state doesn't act to control tailpipe emissions.

The law applies only to Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties. It requires motorists there to have $10 tests at certified stations to show their vehicles aren't emitting too many pollutants.

"I felt from the beginning that to control emissions was a pittance, compared to catalytic converters and unleaded gasoline," said Nichols, who was elected to the Legislature in 1982.

Nichols said that if the federal embargo is applied, Michigan will have until next August to renew the emissions test law.

Voting to send his SB 420 to the Senate floor were Republicans Richard Fessler of West Bloomfield and Dan DeGrow of Port Huron. Opposed were Democrats John Kelly of Detroit and Jerome Hart of Saginaw.

BUT LARRY Tokarski, spokesman for Gov. Jame Blanchard's Commerce Department, said, "The economic climate will be adversely affected. This could be devastating."

Tokarski said the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency could put an embargo on $1.75 billion in highway construction alone if southeastern Michigan pollutes the air. Some 9,000 jobs could be affected, he said.

John Amberger, executive director of the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments, said local governments' No. 1 concern is preventing economic sanctions by the federal government.

Amberger said business' attitude is, "Let's not cause people to think there may be economic sanctions. If there are, we don't want to invest here."

Dale Robertson, representing the Greater Detroit Chamber of commerce, said southeastern Michigan's business image would suffer from "publicity" if the EPA applies sanctions.

DICK ALLEN, former Republican state senator and now Blanchard's state business ombudsman, opposed the bill, saying its passage "would cause business to be concerned."

Dennis Neuner, representing the Secretary of State's office, opposed the bill, citing the investments garages and repair shops have made in testing equipment.

Dick Augenstein, representing the Michigan Manufacturers Association, said business is "terrorized by the infamous EPA," and asked continuation of the test law.

Spokesmen for General Motors and Ford Motor Co. indicated on cards the two auto makers opposed the Nichols bill but declined to speak.

Oakland's annual auction is Oct. 17

Everything from stereo equipment to tools, from 40 late-model vehicles to office furniture will go up for public auction Saturday, Oct. 17, behind the County Central Garage in the county service center, 1200 N. Telegraph, Pontiac.

The auction begins at 10:30 a.m. Gates open at 8:30 a.m. for public viewing of merchandise.

In addition, the Oakland County Sheriff's Department is sponsoring its annual fall auction of recovered stolen property and surplus property.

The public may view and inspect the vehicles only Thursday and Friday, Oct. 15 and 16. Other items will be available for viewing the morning of the auction.

"Everyone benefits from our public auction," said Oakland County Executive Daniel T. Murphy. "Residents can buy good equipment and merchandise at low prices while the county raises funds to purchase new equipment."

Various items up for auction include Chevrolet patrol cars, several LeMans, Sunbirds, Suburbans and a Camaro.

A large quantity of commercial land and grounds equipment also will be auctioned including a Ford tractor with loader back hoe attachments, a Davis Trencher, Cushman Trucksters and a Showmobile mobile state and entertainment unit.

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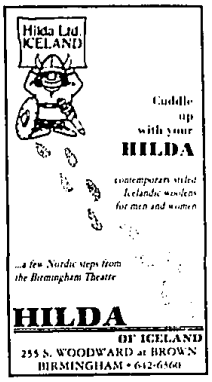

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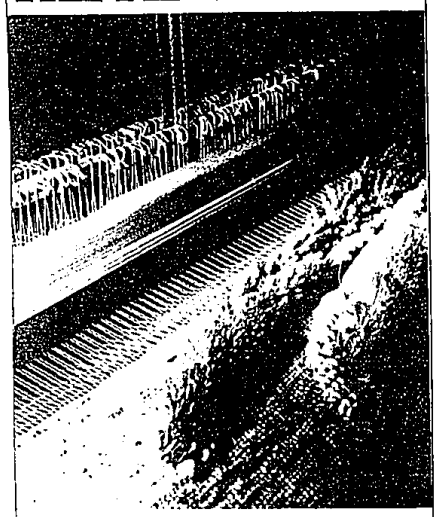

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