

DRIVING FORCE

OCTOBER 2005



LEGISLATIVE QUICK HITS

[Editor's note: The following is an update on legislation that is currently pending before state legislatures across the country. In addition, several states meet in two year legislative cycles and bills that were not passed this year will automatically be "carried over" to 2006.]

Massachusetts Street Rods/Custom Vehicles: Two separate but identical SEMA model bills are pending in Massachusetts. The bills would create a vehicle registration classification for street rods and custom vehicles and provide for special license plates for these vehicles. Both bills would allow kit cars and replica vehicles to be assigned a certificate of title bearing the same model year designation as the production vehicle it most closely resembles. A committee hearing has not yet been scheduled.



Massachusetts Exhaust Noise: A SAN-opposed bill to ban the sale or installation of "an exhaust system that has been modified in a manner which will amplify or increase the noise emitted by the exhaust" is again pending in Massachusetts. It has been revised from last year's version to exclude limited-use "antique motor cars." Like previous efforts, the bill does not supply law enforcement with a clear standard to enforce and would make it difficult for hobbyists to replace factory exhaust systems with more durable, better performing options. A committee hearing has not yet been scheduled.

Michigan Occasional Use: The SAN continues to work to gather support for legislation that would amend Michigan's current law defining historic vehicles. The bill would allow these vehicles to take advantage of "other occasional use." Under current Michigan law, use of historic vehicles is strictly limited to club activities, exhibitions, tours and parades. Many Michigan vehicle owners whose cars qualify for the historic registration class have chosen to register as "daily drivers" to avoid the limited use restrictions and are, by consequence, paying the higher fees required of cars that are registered under this class.

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A Little Help From Our Friends...

State Legislative Caucus Unites Car-Loving Lawmakers

In its continuing efforts to promote and protect the auto hobby, SEMA and the SEMA Action Network (SAN) has partnered with state lawmakers from across the country in establishing the State Automotive Enthusiast Leadership Caucus. Formed this year, the Caucus is a bi-partisan group of state lawmakers whose common thread is a love and appreciation for automobiles. To date, over 75 state legislators from California to New York and points in between are involved in the Caucus.



California Assemblyman, Caucus member and avid enthusiast, Doug La Malfa stands next to his first car, a '68 Mustang California Special.

Montana State Senator John Brueggeman (who is serving as the Caucus chairman) said, "From pre-World War II classics to street rods to 60s-era musclecars to late model imports and everything in between, the automobile stands as a testimony to ingenuity and craftsmanship while serving as a source of recreation for tens of thousands of enthusiasts and collectors throughout the U.S. By joining the Caucus, these legislators have demonstrated their commitment to enabling this enthusiasm for years to come."

Supported by SEMA's Government Affairs office in Washington, D.C., the Caucus is anticipated to help raise the motor vehicle hobby's profile in the state legislatures and in the eyes of the public. Working in state capitals, many of these legislators have sought to preserve and protect the hobby by improving existing motor vehicle statutes and creating new programs to safeguard and expand the hobby.

For a complete list of Caucus members, see p. 2.

"Over the past several years, the work of these lawmakers has brought a series of significant legislative accomplishments for the vehicle enthusiast community on issues ranging from equipment standards to registration classifications, and from emissions test exemptions to hobbyist rights," said Steve McDonald, SEMA's Vice President of Government Affairs. "Through the Caucus, automotive enthusiasts will now be able to quickly identify which state legislators have chosen to be recognized for their support of this great American hobby."

For more information about the Caucus, visit the SAN website at www.semasan.com.