



## Michigan ROUNDUP

### Legislative Week in Review

- Landmark legislation forcing environmental polluters to clean up their toxic wastes cleared the Senate Wednesday in the form of a three-bill, "polluters pay" package widely expected to gain Governor Blanchard's signature. Most of the bills' provisions have already passed the House, whose final concurrence with the Senate's action is virtually guaranteed. Previous attempts to pass a pollution clean-up package have foundered in the Senate, which approved the latest bills on votes of 28-4, 29-4, and 27-6. The *Detroit Free Press* reports that the legislation once passed could cut the time to clean up Michigan's 3,000 toxic waste sites from 180 years to 25 years and reduce costs to taxpayers by more than \$6 billion.
- Michigan's inheritance tax would be totally wiped out under provisions of SB 1024, approved by the upper chamber 29-3 on Wednesday. Some place the estimated lost revenue from the measure as high as \$65 million, and most observers see no future for the bill—at least in its present form—when it reaches the Democratic-controlled House.
- After rejecting the governor's new Medicaid budget proposal last week, the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Social Services passed this week a DSS continuation budget of \$272 million GF/GP for the first quarter of FY 1991, delaying until after November's elections decisions on major budget cuts. The measure covers appropriations for the DSS budget lines vetoed by the governor in July and passed the House unamended after lengthy debate; Senate approval is now required.
- Negotiations over the fate of a continuation budget for the state prison system continue within the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Corrections. With only three scheduled session days next week before pre-election adjournment, lawmakers face mounting pressure to resolve departmental budget allotments earlier vetoed by the governor.
- On a 20-11 vote, the Senate approved and sent to the House on Wednesday a capital outlay budget of \$318 million. Nearly \$27 million of that total would be tapped from the state's "rainy day fund," a provision that sparked debate and unsuccessful amendment attempts on the floor.

### Political News

- Campaign staff for Gov. Blanchard and his opponent Sen. John Engler have announced a schedule of three candidate debates next month. One-hour debates including questioning from a panel of journalists will be televised live on October 6 and 15. A third debate will be taped at WKAR-TV studios in East Lansing on October 17 for broadcast October 20.
- Nearly 200 Michigan National Guard members in two mid-state units have been called up to active duty in the Middle East. A Midland supply and service unit and a Lansing transportation corps received their mobilization orders this week, the first such unitwide dispatch received in the state since the Korean War.
- Congressional hearings on automobile fuel efficiency standards revved up this week, according to the *Detroit Free Press*. U.S. Reps. John Dingell and Bob Carr oppose proposed tough increases in federal fuel economy rules that could boost average auto mileage to about 40 m.p.g. by 2001. Dingell twitted a committee member whose spouse drives a high performance import not known for fuel economy, while Carr advocated wholesale repeal of fuel economy rules, calling them "so much snake oil."
- Under terms of a state supreme court decision released last week, the State Bar of Michigan has lost its power to appoint two members to the Attorney Grievance Commission, the ethics review panel for the state's 27,000 lawyers. According to the *Detroit News*, this leaves the state bar without direct representation on a state lawyer disciplinary agency for the first time since the state bar's inception in 1935. Formerly, the state bar directly appointed two of the AGC's seven members. Under the court's new ruling, the AGC will be expanded to nine members, including three nonlawyers, all of whom will be appointed by the court itself, although nominations will be solicited from the state bar.
- Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe will visit Michigan State University's campus next week en route to the United Nations opening session and meetings with President George Bush. Mugabe, whose African nation has had long ties with the state's land-grant university, will receive an honorary doctorate of law degree from MSU.