

West Penn AAA Motor Club testimony at Public Hearing re:
HB 562, PN 589 (Annual automobile safety inspection) at
Monroeville Municipal Building, August 19, 1981.

Good afternoon, I am John Patterson, manager of Public Affairs for the West Penn AAA Motor Club with more than 260,000 members.

I would like to present the Club's viewpoint on once-a-year safety inspection by repeating the position we took editorially in the August issue of the Club publication, The Western Pennsylvania Motorist.

The title of the editorial tells how we feel about once-a-year inspections in a nutshell--It's OK, says AAA.

The editorial goes on to say: Once every six months, Pennsylvania motorists put their cars under a "Safety stethoscope" as a requirement to assure mechanically safe cars and trucks on our streets and highways. But are these semi-annual trips to the car doctor necessary?

The Pennsylvania AAA Federation has taken a close look into the question of Pennsylvania's Motor Vehicle Inspection Program (PMVI) and was the first major organization to call for reducing this inspection program to just once a year. West Penn AAA Motor Club, as a member of the AAA Federation and its Safety Committee, cites national evidence that once-a-year inspection will not increase highway accidents.

Many highways safety studies - one conducted by Indiana University of Pennsylvania and another by the Office of Budget and Administration of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania - state that human factors caused between 80 percent and 85 percent of accidents and that vehicle factors came to less than 6 percent. This figure does not change in states where once-a-year or random inspections are

now in effect.

The opponents of once-a-year inspection say that anything less than twice-a-year is unsafe. Statistics show that not to be true.

Many inspection stations feel that individual car owners will not maintain their cars properly unless forced to undergo twice a-year inspections. In some cases that may be true.

But we should not confuse safety inspection with periodic maintenance. A once-a-year inspection law should concentrate on the major items which are related to the safety of the vehicle - brakes, steering, tires and headlights.

The nitty-gritty here is the safety aspect.

Twenty-two states have once-a-year inspections, six states have twice-a-year inspections. The others have random inspections. The accidents rates are no different.

Annual inspection, AAA believes, would have no detrimental effect on vehicles and, therefore, highway safety.