

TESTIMONY OF JAMES BASTONE
AUTOMOTIVE SERVICE ASSOCIATION OF PENNSYLVANIA
BEFORE THE HOUSE TRANSPORTATION SUBCOMMITTEE
EMISSIONS INSPECTION PROGRAM
FEBRUARY 25, 1992

I am James Bastone. I own and operate an automobile repair facility in Pittsburgh. I am speaking today on behalf of the Automotive Service Association of Pennsylvania, which represents over 1500 automobile repair and body shops in the state.

I have participated in the I/M program that currently exists in the Pittsburgh area since its inception. To participate in the program, I was required to buy an analyzer that cost in excess of \$7500, pay \$125 a quarter for the analyzer company to pick up the information cassette for the state, and was locked in to a maintenance contract the cost of which skyrocketed during the program. During that time, while all of the inherent costs were increasing, we in the industry were limited to charging \$8 per test, reflecting only one increase from the original \$5 per test cap in the initial enabling legislation. The legislature and the Governor's office refused our requests for a reasonable increase.

With that background, I am not going to tell you that the decentralized emissions program has been a bed of roses for the automotive repair industry. However, the other reality is that Pennsylvania motorists have been used to "one stop shopping" when it comes to their state inspection requirements. In Pittsburgh, more often than not, the customer drops his car off for the day, gets the safety and emissions test done at

the same time, and whatever repairs necessary.

A critical element in the success of any future program in the state is how motorists will react to any change in this current behavior.

The state certainly seems to be leaning toward a centralized system. I feel that most of our membership would support a decentralized system if the option selected provides for use of a Bar-90 or similar piece of equipment.

However, if the preponderance of concerns leads us to a centralized system, several elements would be critical to ASA if we were ever to support such a program.

First, any company or its subsidiary which was performing centralized tests would be prohibited from doing repair work.

Second, the centralized testers would be prohibited from doing safety inspections. Most observers agree that our safety inspection program works as well as any in the country. That is largely because of the wide range of competition in the marketplace that would be violated by any centralized move.

Third, a workable system is needed for a retest system. The question of what happens when a person fails the test, and who performs the retest, is a critical unanswered question at this point. Remember: If we go centralized, the potential

here for motorists to spend not one day, but three days

their responsibilities under the law.

Fourth, some consideration needs to be given shops who have purchased equipment for the current program and may now find that equipment useless under the new program.

I appreciate the opportunity to participate in this hearing today. We look forward to working with you as the program unfolds.