Tuning Into The Law

Sport-Compact/Tuner Enthusiasts Join in the Effort to Protect the Hobby

Lawmakers across the country continue to debate legislative proposals that impact the auto hobby, several of which are directly targeted at tuner or sport-compact vehicles. Dedicated to protecting all facets of the auto hobby, the SEMA Action Network (SAN) has been successful in enacting laws which allow individuals to reasonably and responsibly modify their vehicles. When needed, the SAN has also modified or defeated legislation that would unfairly restrict this right.

“While not completed, the 2005 legislative session has already brought a series of significant legislative and regulatory accomplishments for sport-compact enthusiasts on a range of equipment standards, from lighting to wheels and tires, modified exhaust systems to nitrous oxide,” said SEMA’s Vice President of Government Affairs Steve McDonald.

Among the bills being considered, those receiving the most attention concern the use of modified exhaust systems. Six states (Hawaii, Illinois, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Virginia) have introduced legislation this year dealing with exhaust noise or the use of specialty-equipment exhaust systems. These measures come on the heels of the two-year anniversary of California’s exhaust-noise testing program. Adopted in August 2003, the SAN-supported program established a 95-decibel limit under an objective testing procedure through which individuals can prove that their vehicles comply with state noise standards. In each instance this year where legislation was introduced that would restrict modified exhaust systems, the SAN was quick to contact the sponsor of the bill and offer the 95-decibel program as an alternative. The status of some of these bills is discussed in other sections of this newsletter.

Another issue receiving attention by lawmakers is the use of optional or ornamental lighting equipment on vehicles. Ranging from ground effect or “halo lights” to windshield wiper lights, the SAN has rallied behind legislation that allows individuals to use optional lighting so long as there is no proven safety hazard associated with the equipment. To that end, the SAN supported legislation to permit accent lighting on vehicles that meet certain conditions, including color and intensity restrictions. The new law also provides for undercarriage neon lighting, although not for use on public roadways, and allows blue-interior and dash lighting under some circumstances.

Tuners Talk Back

In the following paragraphs, enthusiasts from the sport-compact community address issues that impact their part of the hobby.

1. What do you think is the biggest misconception about the sport compact crowd?

That everyone who fixes up his/her car is involved in illegal street racing and that we are all involved in gangs. The biggest problem is ignorance.

— Frank from Washington, D.C. Club: District CRX

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Battle Lines Drawn as Congress Considers Reforming Endangered Species Act

Lawmakers from both parties are gearing up for a heated debate this summer on reforming the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Enacted in 1973, the law currently provides protection to 1,800 species and their surrounding habitat. While House and Senate leaders largely agree on the current problems with the ESA, there are vast differences in finding legislative solutions. For years, property owners and off-roaders have argued that the law allows the government to quickly list a species and designate the surrounding area off limits.

There have been several hearings in both the Senate and House. Senate Wildlife Subcommittee Chairman Lincoln Chafee (R-RI) recently stated that the hearings were a starting point in the process and that he would not want to do anything to damage or weaken existing law. This is in sharp contrast to his counterpart in the House of Representatives, Resources Committee Chairman Richard Pombo (R-CA). Chairman Pombo has allied with the Bush Administration, Western governors and several Western lawmakers, and is pushing for quick and drastic reforms to the ESA.

To support his claims for ESA reform, Chairman Pombo recently released a SAN-supported report prepared by committee staff that highlights problems associated with the 30-year-old law. The 84-page document calls for a legislative update to existing law, in which it claims that only 10 species have been recovered and that 60% of listed species have an uncertain or declining status. Environmental groups have countered that species recovery has been recovered and that 60% of listed species have an uncertain or declining status. Environmental groups have countered that species recovery has been recovered and that 60% of listed species have an uncertain or declining status. Environmental groups have countered that species recovery has been recovered and that 60% of listed species have an uncertain or declining status. Environmental groups have countered that species recovery has been recovered and that 60% of listed species have an uncertain or declining status.

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New Rule Allows States to Challenge Current “Roadless Area” Designations

The Bush Administration issued a final rule allowing states to petition the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) to open areas previously closed under the Clinton Administration’s so-called “roadless rule.” The new rule establishes a process for considering state recommendations on which roadless areas should remain closed and which should be opened to logging, mining or other commercial ventures. The revision is consistent with the SAN’s position that state government and local communities should participate in forest-management decisions. In its comments on the proposed rule, the SAN noted that the state petitioning process could be an opportunity to correct inaccurate roadless designations and include uninventory routes well known to users and state officials but that do not appear on current USFS maps. Governors will have 18 months to submit their petitions. They may submit scientific data and updated mapping information to support their recommendations. The rule covers nearly 58.5 million acres of national forests and grasslands, mostly in Western states.

Exhaust and tinting are two very big issues that affect my car and my friends’ cars. More information in magazines about new legislation and getting the word out about the SAN would be the best thing to get more sport-compact people involved in issues like these.

— Mitchell from Galloway, NJ
Club: Unique Styling

It is often hard to get the younger generation interested and involved in government and politics. What do you think is the best way to get them involved in shaping the laws that impact their hobby?

I am 58 years old and have been working on my different rides for years. Modifying rides has been going on since the first car was made. Everyone, no matter who it is, likes to add personal ideas to their car. It is not only the younger generation but also my generation who should get involved. Having the SAN at shows like IAS helps a lot, but having rallies would help too.

— Warren from Brooklyn, NY
Club: NYC Maximas

4. The SEMA Government Affairs Office has successfully introduced model legislation on exhaust noise in a number of states that sets an objective 95-decibel limit under a fair and reasonable test standard, allowing owners to prove that their modified exhaust systems comply with the law. Would you be interested in seeing this legislation introduced in your state?

Most, if not all of us, would love to see a clear and understandable law put into place. Setting up a 95-decibel program would do that. Here in Virginia, the law restricts any excessive noise. Please define any excessive noise. The 95-decibel program would allow us to prove that our exhausts comply with the law and not leave it up to law enforcement to decide who is too loud and who isn’t.

— Richie from Winchester, VA

On The Road Again

We invite you to stop by and meet with Jason Tolleson, director of the SEMA Action Network, at these events in July:

July 3-4
Star City Motor Madness
Roanoke, Virginia
www.starcitymotormadness.com

July 15-17
Syracuse Nationals
Syracuse, New York
www.rightcoastcars.com
Tuning Into The Law
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extent, the SAN-opposed legislation in New York and North Carolina that sought to ban certain forms of lighting equipment and supported bills in Arkansas and Maine that permitted the use of ornamental neon lights.

The SAN has also been successful in working with lawmakers regarding the permissible use of nitrous-oxide systems. In Arkansas, the SAN negotiated a compromise to legislation that originally threatened to prohibit all vehicles equipped with nitrous-oxide systems. In the modified legislation, the mere presence of nitrous systems on passenger cars or motorcycles does not constitute a violation. The system must simply be disconnected when a vehicle is being driven on a public road or the nitrous-oxide containers must be removed. Similar legislation in Maine allows for the use of nitrous-oxide systems so long as the canisters have been removed or if the vehicle is en route to or from a racetrack, car show, off-highway competition or a fill station.

In regards to racetracks, SAN members in New Hampshire and New Jersey have played a key role in opposing legislation in their states that would unreasonably restrict the hours of operation at these facilities. Generally, these bills represent an attempt by a small group of residents to silence racing without regard to the many racing enthusiasts in the state. These measures attempted to impose a statewide, one-size-fits-all approach to racetrack control, ignoring the significant recreational benefits these facilities provide.

Wheels—more specifically those known as “spinners”—have recently become an issue for lawmakers as well. In what could be the first step in limiting custom-wheel and hubcap options, Iowa, New York and Virginia each introduced legislation to restrict the use of spinner hubcaps. The proposed bill in New York would subject vehicle owners to fines of up to $750 for a third or subsequent violation. The SAN defeated the Iowa and Virginia proposals, arguing that spinners have no proven detrimental effect on motor vehicle safety and are not prohibited by Federal law. The New York bill remains pending in the legislature.
I recently received a legislative action alert on the proposed restrictions to modified exhausts in Illinois. As a long-time member of the SAN, I appreciate the information provided through *Driving Force* and the action alerts. However, why was there such short notice on HB 2221? When I called my state representative, his staff mentioned that they were going to adjourn in just a few days.

Steve Thompson
Chicago, Illinois

Steve,

We appreciate you taking the time to contact your representative about HB 2221. As introduced earlier in the year, the bill contained no reference to exhaust systems or exhaust noise. In the closing days of the legislative session, the bill was amended and rushed through the Illinois House of Representatives. The sponsor of this bill attempted to do this under the radar, leaving little opportunity for public input.

This is not the first time—or will it be the last time—that we will see a situation like this. In the days and weeks before the legislature adjourns, there is a flurry of activity. We here at the SAN will get the information in your hands as quickly as possible; however, it is through the efforts of individuals like yourself, who will voice their opinion to elected officials, that we will be able to preserve and protect this hobby.
## JULY 2005 SAN CLUB EVENTS

### CALIFORNIA

**July 1-3, Fontana**  
SAAC-30  
Sponsor: Shelby American Automobile Club  
Information: www.saac.com

**July 12-16, Burbank**  
Hooray for Hollywood, 36th Annual National Meet  
Sponsor: WPC Club Inc.  
Information: 818/843-6000

**July 29, Rancho Cordova**  
Vintage Friday Car Show  
Sponsor: Gold Country Cruisers  
Information: 916/853-2244

### COLORADO

**July 16-19, Salida**  
Rocky Mountain Rendezvous  
Sponsor: Scout and International Motor Truck Association  
Information: www.rmihr.org or 303/838-8505

### CONNECTICUT

**July 10, Guilford**  
13th Annual Corvette Show and Swap  
Sponsor: Club Corvette of Connecticut  
Information: www.clubcorvettect.com or 203/481-9439

### ILLINOIS

**July 17, Union Grove**  
CGH Drag Day/Card Show  
Sponsor: Chicago Gearheads  
Information: 630/918-5552

### IOWA

**July 1-3, Des Moines**  
14th Heartland Nationals  
Sponsor: Goodguys  
Information: www.good-guys.com or 925/838-9876

### MARYLAND

**July 30, Pasadena**  
Brits by the Bay Car Show and Flea Market  
Sponsor: Triumphs Around the Chesapeake  
Information: www.tractld.org or 410/679-6421

### MASSACHUSETTS

**July 1-4, Worcester**  
15th Annual New England Summer Nationals  
Information: 508/987-3375

**July 30, Billerica**  
Cruz In  
Sponsor: Bearing Burners Car Club  
Information: www.bearingburners.com

### MICHIGAN

**July 29-31, Birch Run**  
Great Lakes Fiero Festival  
Sponsor: Michigan Fiero Club  
Information: barbfiero@msn.com or 517/543-6002

### MINNESOTA

**July 4, Eagan**  
3rd Annual Eagan Car Show  
Sponsor: Rebel Rods  
Information: www.rebelrodsarcclub.com

**July 8-10, Duluth**  
33rd North Shore Rod Run  
Sponsor: Vintage Times Car Club  
Information: sawyer9545@aol.com or 715/392-4142

**July 9, Carlton**  
Black Bear Casino 9th Annual Car Show  
Sponsor: Nifty 50 Cruisers Car Club  
Information: www.blackbearcasinohotel.com

**July 15-16, St. Cloud**  
2nd Annual Bad Boyz Car Show  
Sponsor: Bad Boyz, Inc.  
Information: info@badboyzcarshow.com or 320/259-4043

### MISSOURI

**July 1, St. Louis**  
GTO Nationals  
Sponsor: Gateway GTO Association of St. Louis  
Information: www.gatewaygto.com

### NEVADA

**August 4-7, Reno**  
40th Annual Reno Classic Car and Parts Swap Meet  
Sponsor: Central Jersey Volkswagen Society  
Information: www.annaircooledgathering.com or 908/496-4985

### NEW JERSEY

**July 16-17, Flanders**  
All Air-cooled VW Car Show, Car Corral & Swap Meet  
Sponsor: Central Jersey Volkswagen Society  
Information: www.annaircooledgathering.com or 908/496-4985

**July 23, Fernley**  
Silverado Classic  
Sponsor: Classic Chevys of Reno  
Information: www.classicchevyclubreno.com or 775/358-3673

### NEW HAMPSHIRE

**July 24, Contoocook**  
4th Annual Deep Woods Extreme, Inc. 4WD Truck Show  
Sponsor: Deep Woods Extreme, Inc.  
Information: www.deepwoodextreme.com

### NEW YORK

**July 10, Greece**  
2005 Annual Show-n-Shine Picnic  
Sponsor: Street Machines of Rochester  
Information: 585/225-4324 or 585/663-0393

**July 15-17, Syracuse**  
Syracuse Nationals  
Sponsor: Right Coast Association  
Information: www.rightcoastcars.com or 800/753-3978

**July 31, Rochester**  
45th Annual Outdoor Car Show  
Sponsor: Genesee Valley Antique Car Society  
Information: www.gvacs.com or 585/266-7830

### NORTH CAROLINA

**July 1-3, Waynesville**  
38th Annual Auto Show, Flea Market and Car Corral  
Sponsor: Mountaineer Antique Auto Club  
Information: davidnorris@hotmail.com or 828/245-7587

### OHIO

**July 4, Xenia**  
40th Anniversary Car Show and Swap Meet  
Sponsor: Greene County Antique & Classic Car Club  
Information: mike7353@aol.com or 937/372-3405

**July 8-10, Columbus**  
8th Goodguys Nationals  
Sponsor: Goodguys  
Information: www.good-guys.com or 925/838-9876

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Information: www.good-guys.com or 925/838-9876

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**Check out these early August 2005 events**

### NEVADA

**August 4-7, Reno**  
40th Annual Reno Classic Car and Parts Swap Meet  
Information: www.renoswapmeet.com or 916/933-0949

### OHIO

**August 6, Columbus**  
Neo-Fest Custom Compact Nationals  
Sponsor: Classic Events  
Information: www.classicevents.com or 614/268-1181
Newly Introduced Legislation
Note: The following state bills are not laws. They were recently introduced and are currently under consideration by the respective state legislatures:

**ANTIQUE/HISTORICAL VEHICLES**

Nevada ACR 29: Designates May 9, 2005 as Vintage Car Day at the Nevada Legislature.

**EQUIPMENT**

New York AB 8130: Requires that all motor vehicles sold in the state of New York must be equipped with vehicle electronic data recorders.

New York AB 8306: Prohibits the use of video displays within the view of the driver of a vehicle, not including GPS or navigation systems.

New York AB 8521: Prohibits the use and sale of any substance used to cover a license plate in order to avoid law enforcement.

New York AB 8260: Prohibits window tinting with a light transmittance of less than 70% in sport-utility vehicles. Also deletes existing law that allowed tinting on rear windows with less than 70% light transmittance.

**VEHICLE EMISSIONS/INSPECTIONS**

Massachusetts HB 2438: Establishes an annual excise tax rate for all new vehicles based on emissions to encourage the purchase of the least polluting vehicles.

Pennsylvania HB 1630: Exempts hybrid vehicles from the requirement for periodic inspections.

**MISCELLANEOUS**

Pennsylvania SB 675: Prohibits drivers from using handheld mobile telephones while operating a vehicle.

Ohio HB 274: Prohibits any person from driving a moving vehicle while using a mobile telephone without a hands-free device. Also creates the offense of inattentive driving.

**J ULY 2005 SAN Club Events**

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July 20-24, West Chester
31st Annual CCI/WCC International Convention
Information: info@classicchevy.com or 321/385-9703

J July 23, Delaware
2005 Blast from the Past
Sponsor: Vintage Auto Club of Delaware, Ohio
Information: 740/363-3545 or 740/363-4350

J July 23, Troy
1st Annual 4X4 Offroad Challenge
Sponsor: Fletcher Fire Dept.
Information: 937/875-0001 or 937/606-0114

**OREGON**

J July 24, Sandy
Kiwanis 48th Annual Fly-In Cruise-In
Sponsor: Over the Hill Gang
Information: 503/658-3842

**SOUTH CAROLINA**

J July 12-16, Greenville
33rd Annual POCI Convention
Sponsor: Pontiac-Oakland Club International, Palmetto Chapter
Information: www.poci.org or smokecen@gte.net

**VIRGINIA**

J July 3-4, Roanoke
4th Annual Star City Motor Madness
Information: www.starcitymotormadness.com

**WASHINGTON**

J July 13-17, Seattle
Oldsmobile Nationals
Sponsor: Oldsmobile Club of America, Puget Sound Chapter

J July 15-17, Milwaukee
1st Milwaukee Nationals
Sponsor: National Street Rod Association
Information: www.nsra-usa.com or 901/452-4030

**WISCONSIN**

J July 15-17, Oconomowoc
National Antique Oldsmobile Club Annual Meet
Sponsor: National Antique Oldsmobile Club
Information: www.antiqueolds.com or 262/781-1425

J July 29-31, Milwaukee
Round Up 26
Sponsor: Cosworth Vega Owners Association
Information: danwar80@aol.com or 262/679-0550

**Attention Car Clubs, Event Organizers and Enthusiasts!**

Put SAN on Your Mailing List!

We'd like to know what's going on with SEMA Action Network clubs and enthusiasts across the country; what charity events you're involved in; when and where the rod runs, car shows, trail rides, rallies and tech meetings are held; and what legislative and regulatory issues concern club members and individual enthusiasts.

One of the best ways to keep us abreast of what's going on and what's important to the vehicle hobbies nationwide is for us to receive your club newsletters and updates. Please consider placing SEMA on your mailing list. Send correspondence to: Jason Tolleson, SEMA, 1317 F Street, N.W., Suite 500, Washington, D.C. 20004-1105. Or by e-mail at jason@sema.org.