EPA may gain greater status of cabinet department

By CRYSTAL BERNSTEIN

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has a strong chance of becoming a cabinet-level agency, with bills introduced Tuesday in the House and Senate to elevate its status.

opposed adding any organizations to tics. the 14-member cabinet to prevent it from becoming unmanageably large, report on the environment and make

voiced his support of the elevation this

Sens. John Glenn, D-Ohio, and William Roth, R-Del., held a press conference Tuesday morning to introduce a bill which, aside from promoting the EPA to the cabinet level, would President Bush, who until recently create a bureau of environmental statis-

The bureau would issue an annual

recommendations, develop an advisory council on environmental statistics consisting of six private citizens with environmental expertise, try to assert an international environmental role for the United States and urge development banks to encourage energy con-

servation and environmental awareness when lending to other countries, said Verna Wilkins, Roth's press secretary. A press conference was held Tues. afternoon by Reps. Frank Horton, R-N.Y., John Conyers, D-Mich., and Mike Synar, D-Okla., to introduce a similar

Making the EPA a cabinet department is important for two reasons, sources said. Due to international environmental problems, it is necessary for high-ranking representatives to take part in meetings concerning the environment, said Don Upson, minority staff

bill in the House of Representatives.

director for the House Government Operations Committee.

The EPA needs to be a cabinet department so Bush will be made more aware of environmental problems, said Sarah Silver, Synar's press secretary.

"By being elevated to a cabinet-level department, the EPA is provided with increased status, a closer relationship with the president and equal footing with foreign environmental organizations that deal with the United States on environmental issues," she said.

Having an EPA administrator in the cabinet would demonstrate the importance of environmental issues, said Don Follmer, director of public affairs for the N.C. Department of Environment, Health, and Natural Resources.

The elevation of the EPA would probably not affect local dealings with environmental issues, Follmer said.

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Ruth's Potato

Lemons sour for students By NOAH BARTOLUCCI

He thought the lemon was worth a lot more than \$800.

Mike Lower, a junior history major from Raleigh, invested his summer earnings in a 1973 Monte Carlo, his first car, in August 1987.

In one week, he watched his dream car turn into his worst nightmare.

"I thought it was a great deal until it started leaking oil all over the place," said the 21-year-old, who explained his lack of auto mechanics understanding.

When he bought it, he forgot to check the radio and air conditioning. He did a day later, and neither worked. "I was so enamored with the swivel bucket seats that I just forgot to check," he said.

At the time, Lower's uncle was a mechanic for a New England trucking company, and Lower had him briefly examine the car before he bought it. But the problems hidden in the car were not detectable at a glance.

"It started going through about a quart of oil every two days," Lower

The car had 120,000 miles registered when he first bought it. "I ended up having it for six months and then I hit a tree," he said. The engineering of the car seemed unaffected - he later sold it for \$400.

"After a week, the steering column froze. So the kid who I sold it to couldn't

Dennis Aberle, a psychology graduate student from West Hempstead, N.Y., had similar trouble after he paid \$7,000 for a 1985 Chevrolet sport van in 1988.

"I bought it at a dealership in New York, and three times I had to bring it back. First it had to be tuned up, then I heard a banging in the engine, and then they found an oil leak.'

Aberle noticed all these problems within the first month that he owned the van. New York's Lemon Law mandates that the previous owner pay the cost of all necessary repairs discovered in the first 30 days of the new ownership. The repairs, which totaled almost \$500, cost Aberle nothing.

"The last time I took it in, they also had to pay for the fuel pump to be replaced," he said.

Aberle said he felt pressured when he bought the car. "He wanted me to make a decision right there. The guy was pushing me to put money down on it. Finally, I started to walk out, and then he knocked some money off the

Dave Gillespie, a freshman business administration major from Upland, Calif., had to put \$1,000 into a 1983 Volkswagen GTI that he bought in 1988.

"Right after we bought it, we started having problems - especially engine trouble. We took it to an auto mechanic. I'd say it's been in the shop every other week for about a year now."

And in the past six months his car has been broken into three times. "Now I find out from the police that it's one of the easiest cars to break into.'

Kenny Martin, a mechanic and owner/operator of Martin's Automotive, said that anyone looking to buy a used car should have a complete diagnosis done on it. "A thorough cheek could cost about \$100, but it's worth it. It takes a while to find things."

The three most important parts of a car are the transmission, engine and brakes, Martin said. "Those are going to be your most expensive to repair."

According to Martin, it used be that a car with 80,000 miles on it was ready to be traded. "That's not true anymore. With today's road conditions and modern engines, mileage isn't that important..'

Martin also recommended that a person looking to buy a used car make sure there was an extended warranty with the car. "If you find an inexpensive and relatively new car with about 50,000 miles on it, then you could be way ahead of the game."

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