

Gray Davis: Hot Rod Hero

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([PRWEB](#)) April 1, 2003 -- California Governor Gray Davis has won a "Noisy Dozen" award from Noise Free America for signing legislation making it much more difficult for police officers to protect the people of the Golden State from noise pollution created by Hot Rod "enthusiasts."

On September 14, 2002, Governor Davis signed S.B. 1420, pro-noise legislation promoted by the Specialty Equipment Market Association. SEMA represents the \$26 billion automotive aftermarket industry, with 4,500 member firms (such as Flowmaster, Magnaflow, and Borla). These companies market "deep, throaty, killer tone" and "aggressive, American muscle-car rumble," which is inflicted on the public.

S.B. 1420 provides for a statewide exhaust noise testing program that Davis said would offer a "referee function" and provide "objective standards" for noise violations. Former State Senator Maurice Johannessen, a self-described "hot rod legislator" who sponsored S.B. 1420, said it corrected California's tendency to enact legislation based on "faulty information" and "voodoo science."

Unfortunately, S.B. 1420 is based on voodoo science. The legislation require the use of Society of Automotive Engineers test procedure J1169, which employs the A-weighted dB scale to measure exhaust sound--based on 95 decibels at 20 inches. This standard is exactly what the sellers of "deep, throat exhaust notes" need in order to protect their lucrative industry.

Bob Andres, a veteran noise control engineer (<http://www.oshex.com>), notes that "the typically-used A-weighted sound measurement fails to recognize the presence and intensity of very low frequency sound emanating from vehicle sound systems and exhausts. This is because the weighting system virtually cuts off measurement below 80 Hz." Andres observes that "this was not much of a problem in the past, because technology had not yet created the capability to produce the 'bone-jarring' sub-bass so prevalent in modern vehicle systems, and there were fewer cars with aftermarket exhaust systems specially designed to produce more low frequency sound."

Mark Huber, Noise Free America's communication director, noted that before S.B. 1420, "police officers could issue citations to hot rodders who were blasting through California, if their exhaust systems were 'plainly audible.' Now, with S.B. 1420, it will be virtually impossible for California cops to issue noise citations to hot rodders, because the law's standard is so ridiculous. The law even says that hot rodders who 'had reasonable grounds to believe that their exhaust system was in good working order' cannot be cited."

Huber also observed that "Governor Davis' signing of S.B. 1420 demonstrates the political power of the hot rod industry. They have the Aftermarket Political Action Committee, which gives money to political candidates. They have the Congressional Automotive Performance, Specialty & Motorsport Caucus, headed by Senator John Kerry, Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell, and Congressman Sander Levin. They have the money to get their way with elected officials--and the public good be damned."

Ted Rueter, director of Noise Free America, stated that "Governor Davis' signing of S.B. 1420 will worsen



California's public health. Because of Governor Davis, more people will suffer hearing loss, more people will suffer sleep deprivation, and more people will suffer from chronic fatigue. You would think that a governor so proud of signing legislation to combat global warming would be concerned about the destruction of peace and quiet."

Reshelle Smith, a resident of South Lake Tahoe, stated that "I resent the fact that Governor Davis has placed the interests of hot rodders above the interests of the citizens of California. This law will make California even noisier. Citizens throughout the nation are banding together to stop the scourge of noise pollution."

Mark Huber also stated that noise from hot rodders lessens our national security: "Tom Ridge, Secretary of Homeland Security, recently stated that all Americans should be 'alert and aware' of their surroundings. The proliferation of aftermarket exhausts--and Governor Davis' willingness to give them legal protection--lessens our ability to be 'alert and aware' of threats to our safety and security."

Noise Free America is a national lobby organization opposed to the epidemic of noise pollution in American life. Previous "Noisy Dozen" award winners include Jesse Ventura, Flowmaster, Circuit City, and Richmond, Virginia. Noise Free America's web site is <http://www.noisefree.org>



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