

SANTE FE, NEW MEXICO- A resolution casting aspersions on the safety and quality of independently produced collision replacement parts was smacked down here during the June 26-29 convention of NACAA.

The National Association of Consumer Agency Administrators was presented with a General Motors-sponsored resolution which disparaged the independent aftermarket and which inferred that its parts were unsafe.

GM used its position as a member to ask the convention to address this issue.

If that resolution were passed by the convention it could have far reaching impact on the industry because it would have authorized the executive director and the officers to transmit its contents to any individual or entity who is empowered to draft or enact relevant laws, rules and regulations.

According to Eileen Sottile, Director of Government Relations for Keystone Automotive, and also a leading member of the ABPA Legal & Legislative Committee, "This resolution caught us by surprise and had the endorsement and strong support of the carmakers' representatives in attendance at the convention."

Sottile reports that during the past couple of years, the OEMs have heightened their presence with this group; in fact, at this particular meeting there were 16 different reps from as many as six different car companies.

It's no wonder, especially if they can slip into the agenda such disparaging material on their competitors' parts.

The resolution which was canned read, "Whereas significant issues have been raised regarding the reliability and safety of automobile parts not manufactured by the original equipment manufacturers (a/k/a aftermarket crash parts or non-OEM automotive parts); and,

Whereas reliability and safety problems have not been cured by current voluntary self-regulating certification programs for aftermarket crash parts; and

Whereas, entities have attempted to promulgate as model act supporting aftermarket crash parts third party certification;

Now therefore, be it resolved that the National Association of Consumer Agency Administrators:

1) Urges legislators and regulators to carefully investigate the issues of whether certification of aftermarket crash parts adequately addresses safety and reliability issues, and

2) Urges that legislators and regulators determine whether providing consumers with full disclosure and consent regarding the use of non-OEM parts on their vehicle serves as a better alternative to

certification of these parts,

3) Authorizes the executive director, Executive Board and the officers to transmit this resolution to any entity or individual who is empowered to draft or enact relevant laws, rules, regulations, or who enforces the same.

The Resolution was submitted by Sheryl Goodman-Lord, president of the Association.

When Sottile on Thursday evening June 27th apprised ABPA Executive Director Stan Rodman what was taking place, Rodman fired back an anti-resolution paper.

Armed with that paper -- faxed to the hotel way past midnight -- plus some of her own material that she regularly carries to these types of meetings, and a paper compiled by Jack Gillis on OE parts callbacks, Sottile went into action.

She sought out friendly forces as well as the sponsor of the Resolution and distributed the material making sure they understood that the OE's support of this resolution was not steeped in concern over consumers welfare but was purely an economic gambit designed to restore their once sacrosanct monopoly on collision replacement parts.

Said Sottile, who was on the official program speaking on the subject, "After the Crash: Auto Parts Warranty and Insurance Issues," "These administrators deal with so many consumer issues that they cannot be expected to be commensurately knowledgeable about each and every battle in the marketplace."

Whatever she did, it worked because the resolution did not see the light of day.

Quick thinking, fast writing and quick action served to save the day.

Said Executive Director Stan Rodman, "It just goes to show that our industry is continually under attack by the dark forces of the OE's who will stop at nothing to knock us out of the marketplace."

"If Eileen were not at this particular meeting, a resolution which was seemingly beneficial to the consuming public would have been passed with all of the resultant consequences for our industry down the road.

"The fact that she was there to reason with the delegates and to shine a real light on the issue--it's economics and not consumer protection--did service for not only our industry but also for NACAA.

Rodman added, "They may have been embarrassed and, more importantly, really angry when discovering that, under the guise of consumer protection, that they were really being duped by the OE's with that resolution."