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Combatants resort to ads in gasoline-additive row

The Globe and Mail

TORONTO – The auto industry and the makers of a gasoline additive have taken their dispute public, putting ads in newspapers with the intent of influencing Ottawa's commitment to ban MMT.

First it was Ethyl Canada Corp., which last week bought pages in three papers making the argument that there was no reason to remove the octane enhancer methylcyclopentadienyl manganese tricarbonyl, and that in fact the environment might suffer if MMT disappeared.

Yesterday, 18 car makers and auto importers banded together to buy a newspaper ad in *The Globe and Mail* saying "MMT has to go," in response to the Ethyl ad, industry

spokesman Mark Nantais said.

The car makers reiterated their consistent position that MMT clogs sensitive computer sensors that warn drivers when their pollution-control systems are failing.

The ad campaigns come just as the government's bill to ban the import of MMT is getting close to being introduced in Parliament. Environment Minister Sheila Copps is moving "as quickly as she can," spokesman Duncan Dee said.

But that is not because of the ads. "I don't think they really have much of an impact at the end of the day," he said.

Despite the protests from Ethyl, "we've got evidence from the auto makers" that points to the problems caused by MMT, Mr. Dee said.

Ethyl president David Wilson said the minister had another agenda in moving to ban MMT. She wants to adopt U.S. rules, which kept the additive out of U.S. gasoline for 18 years, he said.

(Ethyl's U.S. parent company recently won a court challenge that will see MMT back in use by year-end, Mr. Wilson said.)

Mr. Dee said the minister was interested in protecting consumers and the environment, both of which would suffer if MMT affected car computers.

As well as the ads, both parties have been contacting members of Parliament, cabinet ministers and government committees.

The article EM9519 reprinted above is used in Figure 9.21 of the STAT 220 Course Materials.