

Fine Tuning AIA's Participation on the Canadian Automotive Partnership Council

A number of new AIA initiatives have caught the attention of the Canadian Automotive Partnership Council (CAPC). AIA's participation on the CAPC has also resulted in a number of long-term benefits for the aftermarket industry.

The CAPC identifies and prioritizes short and long-term actions required to strengthen the automotive industry in Canada. CAPC includes representatives from the aftermarket sector (AIA Government Relations Committee Chair Robert Blair from CARQUEST CANADA and AIA President Ray Datt), CEOs from Canadian assemblers, the parts sectors, the head of the Canadian Auto Workers Union, and representatives from Canadian auto dealers and the academic community. Industry Canada Minister Allan Rock is the lead Minister on the Council that also includes provincial industry ministers in both Ontario and Quebec.

AIA recently shared a number of its new initiatives with the CAPC. For example, AIA has completed negotiations with the Automotive Aftermarket Industry Association (AAIA) in the United States to bring the "Be Car Care Aware" program to Canada beginning in the spring of 2004. The primary objectives of the "Be Car Care Aware" Campaign are to:

- ◆ Educate consumers about the benefits of regular vehicle care, maintenance and repair, to positively affect their attitudes and cause them to act (under-performed vehicle maintenance has a market potential in the billions of dollars).
- ◆ Improve the image and shareholder value of aftermarket companies among financial analysts.
- ◆ Create a single unified voice to speak to consumers on behalf of the aftermarket industry.

In addition to obvious benefits to the aftermarket industry, AIA believes this initiative will have the following secondary benefits, which are of interest to industry and government:

- ◆ Improve the image of the industry and help to attract young people, skilled workers and professionals, to the automotive sector to address the skills shortages issues.
- ◆ Reduce emissions.
- ◆ Conserve energy.
- ◆ Improve vehicle and highway safety.

The CAPC expressed support and interest in the Be Car Care Aware program. Also, as part of meeting Canada's Kyoto commitments, CAPC and the government have indicated to AIA that they would like to explore specific initiatives to tie in the Be Car Care Aware program with government programs.

Through its CAPC participation, AIA has also voiced its concerns about aftermarket access to OEM diagnostic and repair information, ensuring the same regulatory environment as the US; as well as the issue of cheap imports from other jurisdictions (Asia).

AIA also supports the work of CAPC on fiscal and investment policy, especially in light of the rising value of the Canadian dollar, as well as support for trade and infrastructure issues. For example, AIA believes the work of the CAPC was instrumental in moving forward the recent commitment by the Federal and Ontario Governments to provide \$336 million in funding for Ontario highways to deal with hold ups at the Canada / USA border crossing in the Detroit-Windsor corridor.

"AIA participation on the Canadian Automotive Partnership Council is extremely beneficial to the aftermarket industry," says AIA Government Relations Chair Robert Blair. "It has helped us to move a number of issues forward in the past year and a half and to raise awareness of the importance of the aftermarket industry. It is one of AIA's most effective tools in ensuring the voice of the aftermarket is heard by government." 