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Letters To The Editor

08/05/10 12:00 AM PST

I would like to respond to the column, "Putting the brakes on a bad bill." My legislation, SB 346, is hardly being rushed. It was introduced on February 28, 2009, and has been under consideration in the Assembly for nearly 14 months. It has been the subject of countless meetings and negotiations. Perhaps Mr. Handschuh's criticisms would have a little more credibility had he personally participated. It is also clear he has not read the current version.

Industry's objections have not been "snubbed time-and-time again," but have been considered carefully. On July 8, industry presented what they led us to believe was their final list of issues. The current bill satisfies most of them, and we have presented proposals to address the remainder. The bill now explicitly states in several key provisions what has been my implicit intent from the beginning: safety is our number one issue. At industry's request, there is now a process for experts, industry representatives and others to evaluate industry's progress in making a safe copper-free brake pad. It allows manufacturers to apply for an extension of time to provide the flexibility industry says it needs.

Despite these concessions, last week we learned we can expect still more demands.

The Washington state bill won't work for California. Local governments face strict copper limits on our urban waterways to meet federal Clean Water Act requirements--Washington does not. Unless a significant reduction of copper in brake pads is achieved by their compliance deadlines, local governments will face enormous fines and cleanup costs.

I have worked hard in good faith to address industry's concerns and will continue to do so. Based on the tone of this column, I question whether industry is doing the same.

Senator Christine Kehoe

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