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WASHINGTON — "There is not now nor is there foreseen a threat to the nation's health from lead emitted from auto exhausts," J.L. Kimberley, executive vice president of the Lead Industries Association, told the House Ways and Means Committee yesterday.

Directing his attack to unsubstantiated charges of lead pollution from auto exhausts, Mr. Kimberley said enactment of the proposed tax of $4.25 a pound on lead in gasoline "would aggravate rather than alleviate a major problem, the control of auto exhaust emissions."

This tax on lead-in-gasoline is part of a revenue package put together and strongly supported by the Treasury Department. It would bring in about $1.6 billion from lead taxes alone, spokesmen told the committee.

But Mr. Kimberley pointed out these conclusions:

1. The tax would be punitive against a relatively small industry and would be a disappearing rather than continuing source of revenue.

(Continued from first page)

2. The tax is not necessary to encourage low-lead or no-lead fuels, even if these are desirable. We are already getting them from companies representing over 50 percent of the gasoline market.

3. The tax would narrow rather than broaden efforts to develop more effective auto emission control systems, by focusing attention on no better than experimental devices working with non-leaded fuel only. Systems have already been successfully demonstrated that work with leaded fuels.

4. The tax would encourage immediate wider use of gasolines having a higher aromatic content, which is known to be smog-causing.

5. Lead is only a fraction of one percent of total automobile emissions and in itself has not been shown to be a major factor in emissions and is not a factor in smog formation. There has not been any showing of a health hazard to the general public as a result of lead emissions from automobiles. Systems to control lead emissions, however, as well as noxious gas emissions have been developed, tested and are being improved.

Mr. Kimberley said the treasury's rationale for the lead tax raises grave questions as to its soundness. Not only is it self-defeating, he said, but more importantly, it could backfire and cause even more pollution. "We urge its rejection," the lead industries spokesman said.

Mr. Kimberley also warned the committee other sources of tax revenue would be lost "through the economic disturbance" that would result from this tax.

To indicate damage to the lead industry by this tax, he pointed out that the $1.6 billion in taxes expected from this levy in the first year is 3.8 times the market value of all lead consumed in the U.S. in 1969, which was estimated by the Bureau of Mines at 2.78 billion pounds. At 15 cents a pound, this would total $417 million worth of lead.

The tax per pound translates into 23 cents per gallon on leaded gasoline. This is about a 6.2 percent increase in the cost of this consumer item — at a time when everyone is trying to hold down the cost of living, Mr. Kimberley told the committee.

He pointed out that pollution controls already have been developed by DuPont, Ethyl Corp. and Mobil Oil which will operate on leaded gasoline. The spokesman cited a California report on leaded gasoline device which "meets nearly all the 1975 proposal for emission standards." (the quote is from the California Air Resources Board.)

Known substitutes for lead to raise the octane count of gasoline are called "aromatics," Mr. Kimberley told the committee. They are far more likely to create smog problems than is lead in gasoline, he emphasized.

Following two weeks of hearings, the Ways and Means Committee will consider this legislation in executive sessions. Other sections of the administration's proposed tax raising measure would accelerate gift and estate tax collections and extend the current level of telephone and auto excise taxes.

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