94th Congress, 2d Session - - - - - - - - House Document No. 94-606

VETO OF THE ELECTRIC AND HYBRID VEHICLE RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT, AND DEMONSTRATION ACT OF 1976

MESSAGE

FROM

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

VETOING

H.R. 8800, AN ACT TO AUTHORIZE IN THE ENERGY RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION A FEDERAL PROGRAM OF RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT, AND DEMONSTRATION DESIGNED TO PROMOTE ELECTRIC VEHICLE TECHNOLOGIES AND TO DEMONSTRATE THE COMMERCIAL FEASIBILITY OF ELECTRIC VEHICLES

SEPTEMBER 13, 1976.—Message and accompanying act ordered to be printed as a House Document

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To the House of Representatives:

I am returning, without my approval, H.R. 8800, the "Electric and Hybrid Vehicle Research, Development and Demonstration Act of 1976."

This bill would establish a five-year, $160 million research, development and demonstration project within the Energy Research and Development Administration (ERDA) to promote the development of an electric vehicle that could function as a practical alternative to the gasoline-powered automobile. One of the major objectives of the project would be the development and purchase by the Federal government of some 7,500 demonstration electric vehicles. Such development would cover some of the areas private industry stands ready to pursue.

It is well documented that technological breakthroughs in battery research are necessary before the electric vehicle can become a viable option. It is simply premature and wasteful for the Federal government to engage in a massive demonstration program—such as that intended by the bill—before the required improvements in batteries for such vehicles are developed.

ERDA already has adequate authority under the Energy Reorganization Act of 1974 and the Federal Non-nuclear Energy Research and Development Act of 1974 to conduct an appropriate electric vehicle development program. Under my fiscal year 1977 budget, ERDA will focus on the research areas that inhibit the development of practical electric vehicles, for wide-spread use by the motoring public. Included is an emphasis on advanced battery technology.

Even assuming proper technological advances, the development of a completely new automobile for large-scale production is a monumental task requiring extensive investment of money and years of development. While the Government can play an important role in exploring particular phases of electric vehicle feasibility—especially in the critical area of battery research—it must be recognized that private industry already has substantial experience and interest in the development of practical electric vehicle transportation. I am not prepared to commit the Federal government to this type of a massive spending program which I believe private industry is best able to undertake.

GERALD R. FORD.

THE WHITE HOUSE, *September 13, 1976.*