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Schaefer Finally Snarls at Glendening — Over Gov's Reversal on Bypass

BY TOM STUCKEY

Associated Press

Since William Donald Schaefer took the oath as state comptroller, a favorite guessing game in Annapolis has been how quickly Schaefer and Gov. Parris Glendening would have their first dustup on the Board of Public Works.

The answer: about one month.

The two men exchanged pointed words yesterday — their first since Schaefer joined the board Jan. 25 — over the governor's decision to cancel plans to build a police training center in Carroll County and a bypass around Brookeville in Montgomery County.

Schaefer directed some of his complaints at a transportation department official before turning to Glendening — who sat inches away — and confronting him on the police training center that was scheduled to be built at Sykesville.

"Didn't you promise this?" Schaefer asked. "To make a promise ... and then all of a sudden say 'no,' that's not right."

Glendening looked Schaefer directly in the eye and calmly but pointedly replied: "There will be a training center, but it will not be at Sykesville."

The Brookeville bypass and the training center are two of the projects Glendening scrapped because he said they violate his smart-growth law. The governor said both would encourage the type of urban sprawl he

is trying to prevent.

Schaefer and state Treasurer Richard Dixon, the third Board of Public Works member, support the projects. They asked for a hearing March 10 to discuss the Brookeville bypass.

Glendening readily agreed to the hearing "as a matter of courtesy," but said there is nothing Schaefer and Dixon can do because there is nothing before the board on either project.

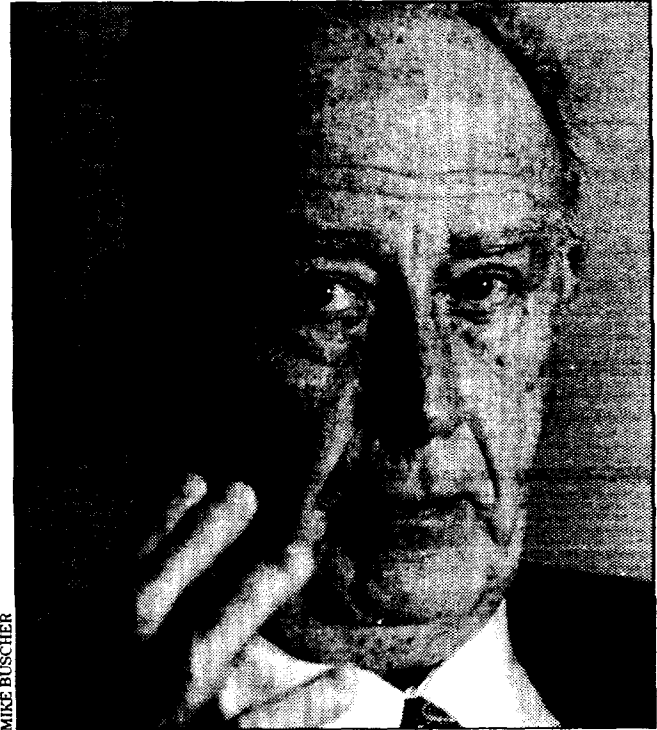
The powerful board has the authority to approve or reject most state contracts and also handles other matters such as dredging and wetlands permits and deciding which school projects will get state funds.

The governor has the backing of Attorney General J. Joseph Curran, whose office issued an opinion that funding of projects is the responsibility of the governor and the legislature. The opinion said that even if Dixon and Schaefer voted to fund a project, Glendening does not have to comply.

Montgomery County officials asked for a hearing on the Brookeville bypass. Carroll County officials plan to ask for a hearing on bypasses around Manchester and Westminster.

The county officials hope that a board vote in their favor would persuade the governor to relent and restore the projects.

Glendening said after the meeting he intends to stand by his decision because if the state does not curb urban sprawl, "it's going to be a disaster."



MIKE BUSCHER

Annapolis-watchers did not believe the love-fest between Comptroller William Donald Schaefer, above, and Gov. Parris N. Glendening would last long.