

HCS HB 222 -- FISHING PERMITS AND LICENSES

SPONSOR: Marsh (Luetkemeyer)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass by consent" by the Committee on Tourism and Cultural Affairs by a vote of 18 to 0.

This substitute allows individuals and corporations to sponsor certain fishing contests on Missouri lakes without a permit from the Department of Conservation. To qualify, the contest must be part of a multi-state contest; can involve only fish tagged in the presence of a representative of the department and have only one tagged fish with a value of more than \$1,000 and less than \$1,000,000 per lake; cannot have an entrance fee; must require all participants to have fishing licenses; and must be completed in less than 30 days.

The substitute also allows people to fish during Father's Day, Mother's Day, and Grandparent's Day weekends without obtaining a fishing permit or license.

FISCAL NOTE: Net Cost to Conservation Commission Fund of \$137,000 in FY 2004, FY 2005, and FY 2006.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that the bill will allow corporations to sponsor fishing contests in Missouri. Currently, the Department of Conservation has a rule prohibiting the release of tagged fish in Missouri. The bill would change this rule only for contests of this type. These contests would encourage fishing in Missouri and would not cost the state any money because the prize money is paid for by the sponsors of the contests. Also these contests would bring tourism dollars to Missouri because people participating in these contests will rent boats, stay in hotels, eat in restaurants, buy fishing gear, and obtain fishing licenses.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Luetkemeyer; and Anheuser-Busch Companies, Inc.

OPPOSERS: Those who oppose the bill say that contests of this nature must occur only on big bodies of water, not small lakes or streams. Also, the kinds of fish being tagged and released must be monitored. Opponents do not want fish that are not indigenous to Missouri being introduced in the state. Opponents think this matter could be better handled through the regulatory process rather than by statute.

Testifying against the bill was the Department of Conservation.

Alice Hurley, Legislative Analyst