

HCS HB 1181 & 1719 -- VEHICLE EMISSIONS INSPECTION PROGRAM

SPONSOR: Dempsey (Selby)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Committee on Job Creation and Economic Development by a vote of 10 to 6 with 1 present.

This substitute requires the Air Conservation Commission to suspend the operation of any motor vehicle emissions inspection program on or before January 1, 2005. The commission must revert to the vehicle inspection standard found in Section 307.366, RSMo, which states, in part, that in any portion of a non-attainment area certain motor vehicles must be tested and approved before they are sold and every two years to determine that the emissions system is functioning in accordance with the emission standards specified by the commission and as required to attain the national health standards for air quality.

The substitute allows the commission to institute a decentralized emission inspection program instead of the current program.

FISCAL NOTE: Estimated Cost on General Revenue of \$40,382,069 in FY 2005, \$98,792 in FY 2006, and \$101,261 in FY 2007. Estimated Cost on Other State Funds of \$271,252 in FY 2005, \$599,896 in FY 2006, and \$570,549 in FY 2007.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that the current vehicle emissions inspection program in St. Louis is not necessary because the air quality has improved in the region due to fewer flights at Lambert International Airport, less manufacturing in the region, and better cars. Great strides have been made in engine and fuel technology that have reduced emissions. Most newer cars self-check themselves for emissions trouble and alert the driver if there is a problem. St. Louis is now in attainment status eliminating the need for the emissions program. The cost of emissions testing has also gone down in recent years, but the fees have not. The \$24 fee charged is too much, especially for people living on fixed incomes. These same individuals tend to drive older cars which have emission problems and are expensive to repeatedly test and repair. St. Louis may be losing revenue because some people will license their cars outside the city to avoid the emissions testing and their property taxes then go to that entity.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Selby; Mufflermat; Ken Storm; Mike Christensen; Ernest N. Cook; Ray Mundy; and United Auto Workers State CAP Council.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that emissions testing

is required by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and that if the program ends in St. Louis, the state will risk losing millions of federal highway dollars. Missouri cannot afford to take that risk. St. Louis has reached attainment status based on the EPA standards in effect prior to April 15, 2004. When new standards take effect after April 15, St. Louis will be in non-attainment status, requiring them to implement a new program to reach attainment again. According to the EPA, vehicle inspection and maintenance programs are the most efficient and effective measures available to help metropolitan areas clean the air. St. Louis has an extremely high rate of childhood asthma which can be attributed to poor air quality. This can be improved and controlled through vehicle emissions testing.

Testifying against the bill were St. Louis Regional Chamber and Growth Association; Alliance of Automotive Service Providers of Missouri; Department of Transportation; Robinwood Automotive Services; Sun Auto Service; Missouri Coalition for the Environment; Sierra Club; American Cancer Society; American Lung Association of Missouri; City of St. Louis; Associated Industries of Missouri; Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry; and ESP Missouri, Incorporated.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill answered technical questions.

Others testifying on the bill was Department of Natural Resources.

Alice Hurley, Legislative Analyst