

HCS SS SB 732 -- RECREATION AND ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICTS

SPONSOR: Gross (Johnson, 47)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass by consent" by the Committee on Local Government by a vote of 18 to 0.

This substitute makes changes to the laws regarding the metropolitan park and recreation district. In its main provisions, the substitute:

- (1) Narrows the duty of the district to only the development, operation, and maintenance of a system of parks and trails;
- (2) Clarifies that nothing will restrict the district from entering into or initiating projects dealing with parks that are not necessarily connected to trails;
- (3) Requires that grants awarded to municipalities for park purposes must be consistent with the purpose of the district;
- (4) Prohibits the district from being a substitute for the powers and responsibilities of other conservation and environmental regulatory agencies; and
- (5) States that nothing in the statute will authorize the district to regulate water quality, watershed, or land use issues in the counties comprising the district.

The substitute also enables St. Charles County to establish a theater, cultural arts, and entertainment district. In its main provisions, the substitute:

- (1) Authorizes a sales tax in the district of up to one-half of 1%;
- (2) Establishes minimum criteria for the formation of the district, including land area and petition requirements;
- (3) Specifies the criteria for and the powers of the district's board of directors, including the power to issue bonds;
- (4) Requires subdistricts to be formed for voting and board representation purposes. A subdistrict that does not vote to approve the district and the sales tax will not be a part of the district nor will the sales tax be imposed within that subdistrict;
- (5) Contains ballot language for the formation and possible dissolution of the district; and

(6) Requires the sales tax to be collected by the municipality and placed into a special trust fund for the purposes of the district.

FISCAL NOTE: No impact on state funds in FY 2005, FY 2006, and FY 2007.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that the bill tightens language to keep the metropolitan park and recreation districts focused on the intent of the original language.

Testifying for the bill were Senator Gross; St. Charles County; and Great Rivers Greenway.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

Julie Jinkens McNitt, Legislative Analyst