

HCS HB 560 -- EXCURSION GAMBLING BOAT OPERATOR LICENSES

SPONSOR: Cooper, 120 (Wright, 137)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Committee on Rules by a vote of 7 to 0 with 1 present.

This substitute limits the number of excursion gambling boat operator licenses that can be issued by the Missouri Gaming Commission to a total of 13. After January 1, 2012, the number of licenses will be limited to the total issued at that time. If any existing license expires, is forfeited, revoked, surrendered, or becomes invalid, the commission may only replace that license with a licensee located in the same city or county as the former licensee. Any new licenses issued prior to January 1, 2012, may only be issued in the counties of Jackson, Clay, Platte, St. Louis, Jefferson, or St. Charles or the City of St. Louis.

FISCAL NOTE: No impact on state funds in FY 2006, FY 2007, and FY 2008.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that it is time to begin limiting excursion gambling boat operator licenses because the industry has matured in Missouri. Casinos cause hardships on Missouri families, and any expansion will make it worse. These limits will also prevent the expansion of gambling to areas of the state where the residents do not want it.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Wright (137); Herschend Family Entertainment Corporation of Branson; Concerned Women for America of Missouri; Casino Watch, Incorporated; and Show Me You Care.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that the Missouri gaming market has not matured, and additional expansion is currently being considered by the Missouri Gaming Commission. The limits proposed in the original bill do not take into consideration these possible expansions.

Testifying against the bill were John Britton; and Missouri Riverboat Gaming Association.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say that the Missouri Gaming Commission is considering expanding the number of licenses.

Others testifying on the bill was Missouri Gaming Commission.

Bill Tucker, Director of Research