

HCS HB 74 -- RURAL EMPOWERMENT ZONES

SPONSOR: Wilson (119)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Special Committee on Rural Community Development by a vote of 8 to 0.

Currently, rural empowerment zones are only allowed to exist in Hickory County, which has a population of 8,940 residents. This substitute allows these zones to exist in any county with 14,000 or fewer residents, which includes 44 counties.

FISCAL NOTE: Estimated Cost on General Revenue Fund of \$0 to Unknown - could exceed \$5,040,000 in FY 2008, FY 2009, and FY 2010. No impact on Other State Funds in FY 2008, FY 2009, and FY 2010.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that the bill will allow more counties to qualify as a rural empowerment zone. It's difficult for rural counties to attract any kind of industry or small business, but this program is a tool that can help. If a business doesn't meet the criteria or create a minimum of 10 new jobs, it won't receive the benefits of the program. The bill will support the most impoverished areas of the state.

Testifying for the bill were Representatives Wilson (119) and Richard; Missouri Economic Development Council; Taxpayers Research Institute of Missouri; and Associated Industries of Missouri.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.