

HCS HB 679 -- DUTIES OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

SPONSOR: Wilson (119)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Special Committee on Rural Community Development by a vote of 9 to 0.

This substitute requires the Missouri Public Service Commission to consider existing planning and zoning plans and building codes governing the area in which an electric plant is to be constructed before approving the final location of the plant. Prior to granting approval, the commission must hold at least one public hearing within the county in the city or village closest to the plant's proposed location.

FISCAL NOTE: No impact on state funds in FY 2008, FY 2009, and FY 2010.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say there are concerns that the Missouri Public Service Commission can override local control on the construction of a new electric plant, which is especially bad for property owners. Although the bill won't change what has already happened in Cass County, it will stop it from happening again.

Testifying for the bill were Representatives Baker (123) and Scavuzzo; and Missouri Association of Counties.

OPPOSERS: Those who oppose the bill say that it will make electricity less reliable and more expensive. Rolling blackouts will become commonplace, and there will never be another power plant built in Missouri. The legislation was filed because one utility company acted in bad faith and that has had repercussions for all utility companies, the majority of which would have handled the situation differently. An electric plant supplies power to people beyond the county in which it is located. The overall public interest may outweigh the desires of the citizens located closest to the plant; however, this is the purpose of the Missouri Public Service Commission. The commission is the best way to analyze and discuss the issues affecting all the stakeholders.

Testifying against the bill were Missouri Public Service Commission; Missouri Energy Development Association; Aquila, Incorporated; and Laclede Gas Company.