

SS SB 578 -- PORT AUTHORITIES

This bill changes the laws regarding port authorities and establishes the Port Improvement District Act. In its main provisions, the bill:

(1) Authorizes every local and regional port authority, except those located in Clay County, to:

(a) Establish a port improvement district;

(b) Carry out certain specified projects;

(c) Levy, upon voter approval, a sales and use tax, a real property tax, or both within the boundaries of the district for the purpose of paying project costs. Railroad property cannot be taxed unless the property's owner agrees to the levy in writing. The sales tax must be levied in increments of one-eighth of 1% but cannot exceed 1%; and

(d) Pledge all revenues generated by any district and any other port authority revenue source to the repayment of any outstanding obligations;

(2) Requires any matching grants awarded by the Highways and Transportation Commission within the Department of Transportation under the Port Capital Improvement Program to be transportation related;

(3) Authorizes a local and regional port authority that is a political subdivision to issue revenue bonds or notes to finance port improvement projects;

(4) Requires any expenditure, including professional service contracts, that is more than \$25,000 to be competitively bid by the port authority;

(5) Allows a local or regional port authority to dissolve if it has no outstanding obligations;

(6) Establishes the Port Improvement District Act which allows a port authority to establish one or more port improvement districts within its boundaries to fund qualified project costs associated with an approved port authority improvement project;

(7) Specifies the procedures for forming or changing an existing district, the notification process of public hearings, and the procedures for terminating a district; and

(8) Requires the board of a port authority to submit an annual

report regarding the services the district provided, revenues collected and expended during the fiscal year, and copies of approved written resolutions. The report must be submitted to the municipal or county clerk and the department within 120 days after the port authority's fiscal year ends; and an annual report must be submitted to the State Auditor in accordance with Section 105.145, RSMo, if the voters of the district have approved a real property tax, sales and use tax, or both.