

HCS HB 698 -- STATE PARKS

SPONSOR: Pietzman

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Conservation and Natural Resources by a vote of 10 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Committee on Rules - Administrative Oversight by a vote of 10 to 4.

This bill specifies that prior to establishing a new state park or expanding any existing park by more than 10% of its current acreage, the current state parks shall be properly maintained, brought up-to-date and in good working order, including no park can have deferred maintenance. The Department of Natural Resources must also submit an annual report to the General Assembly regarding maintenance and construction at state parks and historic sites.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that in recent year, the Department of Natural Resources has purchased land for new parks, rather than maintain the parks the state has currently. It is important to maintain the beautiful parks in the state before adding any more property.

Testifying for the bill was Representative Pietzman.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that this bill would prevent the state from taking advantage of opportunities when they present themselves. The department needs to maintain the current properties but if land became available, the department should have the option of acquiring land, especially if it is donated to the parks system.

Testifying against the bill were Terry Ganey, Sierra Club Legislative Committee and Susan Flader, Missouri Parks Association.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say the parks system currently has a \$200 million capital need list. The new department administration wants to concentrate on these needs.

Testifying on the bill was the Missouri Department of Natural Resources.