

HB 1609 -- LAND CLEARANCE PROJECTS

SPONSOR: Engler

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Economic Development by a vote of 9 to 3.

This bill authorizes the state, acting through the Department of Economic Development and the Office of Administration, or any other public body, to appropriate funds to aid in the planning, undertaking, or carrying out of a land clearance project to develop, construct, reconstruct, rehabilitate, repair or improve any tourism infrastructure facilities in existence as of August 28, 2018. Application for such projects must be made and approved by the Department of Economic Development on or before August 28, 2019. Any annual appropriation for such project must be limited to a portion of tax revenues derived directly or indirectly from the project. The annual amount of the state appropriation may not exceed \$6 million per year for any one project and must be determined to produce a positive net fiscal impact for the state over the terms of the project agreement.

This bill is similar to HB 1061 (2017).

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that the Scottrade Center must be renovated so that the St. Louis area can compete nationally for sporting events, concerts, and other hosting opportunities. The Center's technological facilities are several years out of date, and need to be upgraded for the demands of modern performers. The St. Louis Blues account for only 40% of the Center's use, and so operation expenses must be covered by other users. The Center may lose the National Collegiate Athletic Association's Southeastern Conference Tournament if the Center's facilities are not improved.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Engler; Alex Rodrigo, Kiel Center Corporation; Greg Smith; and the City of St. Louis.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.