

HB 525 -- DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

SPONSOR: Haden

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Conservation and Natural Resources by a vote of 12 to 6. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Legislative Oversight by a vote of 8 to 3.

This bill states that before the Department of Natural Resources designates a presumptive use on any waters north of the Missouri River and the use establishes limitations on ammonia discharged for any point source, the Department must conduct a use attainability analysis on the water to justify the Department's adoption of the use.

If there is a use in effect on any of the waters, the Department must conduct a use attainability analysis on the water to justify the Department's adoption of the use. No application for a permit or a renewal to discharge water contaminants by a point source can require limitation on ammonia until the Department has conducted a use attainability analysis on the water to justify the adoption of the use requiring the ammonia limits.

This bill is similar to HB 2637 (2020).

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that this bill would place the burden of proof for needed costly wastewater system upgrades on the Department. Many small communities do not have funding to upgrade their wastewater plant to meet ammonia limitations that may not be necessary to protect species that do not live in the waters to which the plant discharges.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Haden; Darren Berry, City of Vandalia; Alan Winders, and the Audrain County Commission. Additional written testimony was submitted in support of the bill.

OPPOSERS: Written testimony was submitted in opposition to the bill.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say the ammonia criteria for fish was recommended by the Environmental Protection Agency in 1999 and the Department has been implementing it since 2005. The Department also has programs to help communities fund upgrades to water and wastewater facilities.

Testifying on the bill were Missouri Department of Natural Resources; Chris Wieberg, Missouri Department of Natural Resources; and Tim Remole.

Written testimony has been submitted for this bill. The full written testimony can be found under Testimony on the bill page on the House website.