

HCS HB 1046 -- CONVEYANCE OF PROPERTY

SPONSOR: Dinkins

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Corrections and Public Institutions by a vote of 8 to 3. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Legislative Oversight by a vote of 6 to 3.

The following is a summary of the House Committee Substitute for HB 1046.

This bill authorizes the Missouri Department of Natural Resources to transfer property located in Oregon county. The Commissioner of the Office of Administration shall set terms and conditions for the property transfer and the Attorney General shall approve the form of the instrument of conveyance.

The following is a summary of the public testimony from the committee hearing. The testimony was based on the introduced version of the bill.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that the bill will authorize, but not require the Department of Conservation to convey land purchased with settlement funds for use as a state park. There is ongoing litigation that could prohibit the use of 625 acres as a state park because of federal easement issues. The original purchase of the land with settlement moneys is controversial because the settlement agreement is plausibly read to require the use of such funds for land restoration after lead mining. Lead pollution is a serious problem and the creation of a park does nothing to directly help persons in the lead belt area of Oregon county. If the sale is transacted, then funds could be returned to the settlement fund and used for remediation.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Dinkins; James David Conner; Mike Dethrow; Van McGibney; and Wayne Lee.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that the area at issue has outstanding natural landscapes and the culturally relevant hotel where the Beatles stayed. The land should be open to the general public and will benefit the local economy. State parks generate revenue and are subject to legislative control. It is not clear that settlement funds would be subject to state legislative control. It is also uncertain what the outcome of the litigation will be at this point so best to wait for the appellate process to resolve the matter.

Testifying against the bill were Dana Ripper, Missouri River Bird

Observatory; Missouri Birding Society; Greg Swick, Greater Ozarks Audubon Society; Green Leadership Academy For Diverse Ecosystems; Jill Erickson, Heartland Conservation Alliance; Mary S Nemecek, Burroughs Audubon Society of Greater Kansas City; Kendra Varns Wallis, Missouri Parks Association; Brooke Widmar, Columbia Audubon Society; Missouri Park and Recreation Association; Kendra Varns Wallis, Missouri Parks Association; Sierra Club Missouri Chapter; Arnie C. Dienoff; and Carla Dods.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say that the purchase of the property occurred prior to 2017 and without authorization by the current administration of the Department of Natural Resources. Lawsuits are currently preventing development of the land as a state park.

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

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.