

HCS SS SB 138 -- AGRICULTURE

SPONSOR: Eslinger

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Economic Development by a vote of 9 to 3. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Regulatory Oversight by a vote of 6 to 3.

The following is a summary of the House Committee Substitute for SB 138.

This bill relates to agriculture.

MISSOURI HARDWOOD FOREST PRODUCT PROMOTION (Section 262.911)

This bill requires the Department of Economic Development to promote Missouri hardwood forest products and educate the public on the value and benefit of such products.

The bill creates the "Missouri Hardwood Forest Product Promotion Fund". Money in the fund shall be used to promote and educate about Missouri hardwood forest products.

This bill sunsets six years after the effective date.

FOREIGN OWNERSHIP OF AGRICULTURAL LAND (Section 442.571, 442.576, and 442.591)

This bill requires no alien, foreign business, or foreign government shall acquire any agricultural land in Missouri. Any alien, foreign business, or foreign government that currently owns agricultural land in Missouri shall not grant, sell, or otherwise transfer such land to any other foreign entity. Any proposed sale of agricultural land owned by a foreign entity shall be submitted to the Department of Agriculture at least 30 calendar days prior to such sale or transfer.

Currently, if the Director of the Department of Agriculture finds that an alien, foreign business, or an agent, trustee, or other fiduciary of the foreign business has acquired agricultural land in violation of current statute or the land ceases to be used for nonagricultural purposes under section 442.591, the Director must report the violation to the Attorney General. Upon the effective date of this bill, this includes foreign governments.

The provisions of this bill shall not apply to foreign entities that own land that is used for nonfarming purposes.

These provisions contain an emergency clause.

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

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that forestry-related work adds approximately 52,000 jobs in Missouri, and more than \$10 billion in total economic activity. If more focus and attention is paid to hardwood forest products produced in Missouri, then more businesses and jobs will be created.

Testifying in person for the bill were Senator Eslinger; and the Missouri Forest Products Association.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

Written testimony has been submitted for this bill. The full written testimony and witnesses testifying online can be found under "House Testimony on Senate Bills" on the House website.