



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 50		DATE: 3/27/2023
COMMITTEE: Conservation and Natural Resources		
TESTIFYING: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: ARNIE C. "HONEST-ABE" DIENOFF-STATE PUBLIC ADVOCAT		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL: arniedienoff@yahoo.com	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 3/27/2023 11:55 PM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		

I am in Support of this Bill. Government withholds and purposely withholds information, documents and information hostage through the use and abuse of Charging Illegal Fees. This is wrong and highly Unethical. This bad approach and Policy, Needs to Stop immediately. I would ask that an Amendment be Offered making the maximum Charge of \$200.



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WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: CHARLES MILLER		PHONE NUMBER: 205-538-8876	
REPRESENTING: MISSOURI CONFLUENCE WATERKEEPER		TITLE: POLICY MANAGER	
ADDRESS: 3120 LOCUST STREET			
CITY: ST. LOUIS		STATE: MO	ZIP: 63103
EMAIL: charles@mowaterkeeper.org	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 3/20/2023 8:20 AM	

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Missouri Confluence Waterkeeper supports HB 50, as it would any legislation which makes publicly-generated information available at lower costs. The state and its political subdivisions should strive to make all publicly-generated information, including GIS data, available to as many Missourians at as low a cost as possible. Capping fees for acquiring GIS data is a good first step that will help Missouri businesses of all kinds use the incredible power of geospatial information to identify opportunities for growth. Missouri Confluence Waterkeeper is a member of Waterkeeper Alliance, an international network of over 340 nonprofits on six continents dedicated to defending the human right to fishable, swimmable, drinkable water. Missouri Confluence Waterkeeper works throughout the state of Missouri to protect water through advocacy, organizing, and water quality monitoring. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data is a uniquely powerful tool for businesses of all kinds. Missouri has already established itself as a leader in the geospatial industry, one of the fastest-growing sectors globally. The construction of the new National Geospatial Intelligence Agency West Campus will continue to fuel the growth in this sector, which is already responsible for more than 27,000 jobs and \$5 billion in economic growth in the St. Louis metro area. Ensuring that businesses have access to publicly-generated GIS data at a reasonable cost will help smaller and emerging companies in this sector remain competitive. From Waterkeeper's perspective, GIS data also presents a useful tool for conservation. Locally-generated data like maps of land parcels, sewer lines, parks and recreation areas, and existing municipal rights-of-way can help identify areas that can be protected to improve water quality or recreation benefits to their communities. For example, land trusts can use parcel data to identify landowners of property that could benefit from conservation easements. For other businesses, this information can provide valuable insights into where new locations should be built, including existing infrastructure and community profiles. GIS tools can improve the efficiency of delivery vehicles, finding more efficient routes that save both fuel and time. This "business intelligence" area is one of the fastest growing market segments within the booming geospatial sector. GIS data can inform and enhance decision-making processes for private enterprise, as well as municipalities and state agencies. This valuable information should be shared as widely as possible. Doing so allows both for-profit and non-profit businesses to make more informed decisions. Capping Sunshine Request fees ensures that businesses of all sizes will have access to this valuable, publicly-generated information. We respectfully urge the committee to vote "do pass" on this legislation.



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WITNESS NAME		
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:		
WITNESS NAME: D. SCOTT PENMAN		PHONE NUMBER: 573-690-6772
REPRESENTING: THE PENMAN GROUP		TITLE:
ADDRESS: PO BOX 684		
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO
		ZIP: 65101
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 3/27/2023 12:00 AM
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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: PRESTON SMITH		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: pvsmit@sbcbglobal.net	ATTENDANCE: In-Person	SUBMIT DATE: 3/25/2023 9:55 AM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

I am Preston Smith, a resident of Jackson County, and owner of Business Information Services, LLC here to speak in favor of HB 50. I use the data from county assessors to help estimate public school enrollments, based on when houses were constructed or sold, the size of the houses, and where they were built. The County Assessor is the only source for this data in most parts of the country. Nearly all assessors in the state offer this data online so taxpayers can look up details about their property one at a time. I use the data en masse, county-wide, and need to ask the assessors to provide the data that is used to build their online maps. Realtors, developers, and anybody else who needs precise accuracy on property, taxation and information that only assessors have would have. However, the current state law permits County Assessors to be exempt from the Sunshine act and charge as much as they want for the data, or simply not respond at all. As a bit of background, the GIS data stands for Geographic Information Systems, and when this original law was passed more than 20 years ago, it was a new technology and did have a hefty price tag, and the Assessors claimed they needed to charge fees to cover the development costs. Well, now every county in the state has this infrastructure in place and they do not need the unlimited fee structure to cover costs that have already been budgeted for and paid for many times over during the last 20 years. I see that some testimony has already been submitted by some GIS managers. They describe the tens of thousands of dollars that they spend on getting high-resolution aerial photography and other expensive data sources. What they don't say is that they would be spending for this data year-in and year-out whether they had a single public request for the data. The taxpayers in those jurisdictions have already paid for this data and whatever they charge people who are requesting the data, that is just gravy for their budget. Also, the extremely high-priced data that the GIS managers describe are not the typical data members of the public would want to use because it requires equally high-priced applications and licenses to open the data. My firm has worked in 15 other states during the last 19 years and it is rare to ever pay for this data from County Assessor offices outside of Missouri. In fact, here in Missouri, two of the largest counties, St. Charles and St. Louis, make all their GIS data available online so that anybody can download it, even in several different formats. The City of Kansas City even makes most of this GIS data available for free. Here is a link that shows this data is available, for free, in these counties. St. Charles County <https://gis-sccmo.opendata.arcgis.com> St. Louis County <https://data.stlouisco.com/pages/open-data> City of St. Louis <https://www.stlouis-mo.gov/data/index.cfm> City of Kansas City <https://data.kcmo.org/> I would like to submit for the record this email from the GIS staff at Jackson County, who were ready to charge more \$16,000. While this figures out to be only about 5 cents a parcel, it is still a large expense to get county-wide data. Again, let me stress, this is the same format and data that is free in St. Charles and St. Louis counties. How can Jackson County get away with this? The state law permits it. Let me add, that Jackson County used to have a link that a few people knew about to download the data for free in 2019, but when I started pointing out errors in the Assessment

data, they killed the link. I asked the County Assessor at a public forum last week whether she would make the data available for the public to verify the accuracy of her office's market value determinations and also whether this was truly fair and equitable across the county. She said there would be a cost and she would have to ask staff what that cost and availability would be. Let me give you some other examples: • I have paid about \$1 per parcel for data from Stone County. • I paid close to \$1 per parcel—more than \$3,000—for data from Butler County, only to find out that it was unusable and inaccurate. • Greene County charges \$100 for a data disk for all the parcels in the county. • Clay County has some of the highest fees in the country for the GIS data. • Franklin County requires approval of the GIS department, two signed license agreements and a vote by the full County Commission before sending the data for free. The process takes more than two months. • Data requests at several counties go ignored, even after offering payment. In Pettis County, after I sent nearly a dozen emails and phone calls to request the data over a period of three months, the assessor finally sent a file. It showed that no commercial assessment had occurred in about 15 years and that many other parcels were woefully under-valued based on today's market value. Elected County Assessors have an incentive to under-value property in order to keep winning elections. But this under-valuation is at the detriment of other taxing authorities, such as school districts. Without the public having the ability to analyze this data, it would be impossible to have that level of public accountability. The bottom line is that the current state law that permits County Assessors to ignore the Sunshine act and charge whatever they want for this data has outlived its usefulness. The intent of the original law was to get more data into the hands of more people, but the opposite has occurred. There are still more county offices in this state that either charge for the data or ignore requests than those who make it freely available. I see that some citizens have said that the \$500 ceiling is still too high—I agree—but this would be a huge improvement over counties like Clay and Jackson that insist on charging thousands of dollars. I ask that you vote to approve HB 50 and bring our state into the 21st century where this data is readily available to all, not just those who can afford it, or who are lucky enough to get it from a county office that will pick and choose what to charge and what to send one citizen versus another.



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WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: PRESTON SMITH		PHONE NUMBER: 816-223-1687	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: BUSINESS INFORMATION SERVICES, LLC		TITLE: PRINCIPAL OWNER	
ADDRESS: 375 NW WESCHESTER DRIVE			
CITY: BLUE SPRINGS		STATE: MO	ZIP: 64014
EMAIL: pvsmit@sbcbglobal.net	ATTENDANCE: In-Person	SUBMIT DATE: 3/27/2023 9:01 AM	

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I am Preston Smith, a resident of Jackson County, and owner of Business Information Services, LLC here to speak in favor of HB 50. I use the data from county assessors to help estimate public school enrollments, based on when houses were constructed or sold, the size of the houses, and where they were built. The County Assessor is the only source for this data in most parts of the country. Nearly all assessors in the state offer this data online so taxpayers can look up details about their property one at a time. I use the data en masse, county-wide, and need to ask the assessors to provide the data that is used to build their online maps. Realtors, developers, and anybody else who needs precise accuracy on property, taxation and information that only assessors have would have. However, the current state law permits County Assessors to be exempt from the Sunshine act and charge as much as they want for the data, or simply not respond at all. As a bit of background, the GIS data stands for Geographic Information Systems, and when this original law was passed more than 20 years ago, it was a new technology and did have a hefty price tag, and the Assessors claimed they needed to charge fees to cover the development costs. Well, now every county in the state has this infrastructure in place and they do not need the unlimited fee structure to cover costs that have already been budgeted for and paid for many times over during the last 20 years. I see that some testimony has already been submitted by some GIS managers. They describe the tens of thousands of dollars that they spend on getting high-resolution aerial photography and other expensive data sources. What they don't say is that they would be spending for this data year-in and year-out whether they had a single public request for the data. The taxpayers in those jurisdictions have already paid for this data and whatever they charge people who are requesting the data, that is just gravy for their budget. Also, the extremely high-priced data that the GIS managers describe are not the typical data members of the public would want to use because it requires equally high-priced applications and licenses to open the data. My firm has worked in 15 other states during the last 19 years and it is rare to ever pay for this data from County Assessor offices outside of Missouri. In fact, here in Missouri, two of the largest counties, St. Charles and St. Louis, make all their GIS data available online so that anybody can download it, even in several different formats. The City of Kansas City even makes most of this GIS data available for free. Here is a link that shows this data is available, for free, in these counties. St. Charles County <https://gis-sccmo.opendata.arcgis.com> St. Louis County <https://data.stlouis-mo.gov/pages/open-data> City of St. Louis <https://www.stlouis-mo.gov/data/index.cfm> City of Kansas City <https://data.kcmo.org/> would like to submit for the record this email from the GIS staff at Jackson County, who were ready to charge more \$16,000. While this figures out to be only about 5 cents a parcel, it is still a large expense to get county-wide data. Again, let me stress, this is the same format and data that is free in St. Charles and St. Louis counties. How can Jackson County get away with this? The state law permits it. Let me add, that Jackson County used to have a link that a few people knew

about to download the data for free in 2019, but when I started pointing out errors in the Assessment data, they killed the link. I asked the County Assessor at a public forum last week whether she would make the data available for the public to verify the accuracy of her office's market value determinations and also whether this was truly fair and equitable across the county. She said there would be a cost and she would have to ask staff what that cost and availability would be. Let me give you some other examples: • I have paid about \$1 per parcel for data from Stone County. • I paid close to \$1 per parcel—more than \$3,000—for data from Butler County, only to find out that it was unusable and inaccurate. • Greene County charges \$100 for a data disk for all the parcels in the county. • Clay County has some of the highest fees in the country for the GIS data. • Franklin County requires approval of the GIS department, two signed license agreements and a vote by the full County Commission before sending the data for free. The process takes more than two months. • Data requests at several counties go ignored, even after offering payment. In Pettis County, after I sent nearly a dozen emails and phone calls to request the data over a period of three months, the assessor finally sent a file. It showed that no commercial assessment had occurred in about 15 years and that many other parcels were woefully under-valued based on today's market value. Elected County Assessors have an incentive to under-value property in order to keep winning elections. But this under-valuation is at the detriment of other taxing authorities, such as school districts. Without the public having the ability to analyze this data, it would be impossible to have that level of public accountability. The bottom line is that the current state law that permits County Assessors to ignore the Sunshine act and charge whatever they want for this data has outlived its usefulness. The intent of the original law was to get more data into the hands of more people, but the opposite has occurred. There are still more county offices in this state that either charge for the data or ignore requests than those who make it freely available. I see that some citizens have said that the \$500 ceiling is still too high—I agree—but this would be a huge improvement over counties like Clay and Jackson that insist on charging thousands of dollars. I ask that you vote to approve HB 50 and bring our state into the 21st century where this data is readily available to all, not just those who can afford it, or who are lucky enough to get it from a county office that will pick and choose what to charge and what to send one citizen versus another.



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WITNESS NAME		
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:		
WITNESS NAME: BUSTER SCHRAGE		PHONE NUMBER: 573-634-6436
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: CITY OF JEFFERSON		TITLE: GIS MANAGER
ADDRESS: 320 E MCCARTY STREET		
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO
		ZIP: 65101
EMAIL: bschrage@jeffersoncitymo.gov	ATTENDANCE: In-Person	SUBMIT DATE: 3/20/2023 9:17 AM
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WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: BUSTER SCHRAGE		PHONE NUMBER: 573-634-6436	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: CITY OF JEFFERSON		TITLE: GIS MANAGER	
ADDRESS: 320 E MCCARTY STREET			
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65109
EMAIL: bschrage@jeffcitymo.org	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 3/24/2023 4:36 PM	

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My name is Buster Schrage I have been a GIS professional for 21 years. While working in the private sector for over 15 years I have assisted many local governments in developing and maintaining their GIS systems, all of whom could be negatively impacted by House Bill 50 (HB 50) . I have two main issues with this bill: the definition of GIS data and a \$500 limit on the fee. Definition of GIS Data:The definition of GIS data in HB 50 is broad enough that it could include any piece of data that is maintained by a local government using a computer and tied to a spatial coordinate system or address. A large portion of the data that is maintained by a local government is tied to an address (e.g. utility billing, business licenses, building permits). The GIS data that we produce for our public safety departments are linked to our GIS to assist first responders with information that they would normally not have access to. This data is harvested from other computerized sources within the city and then mapped out or tied to a spatial coordinate system. For example, we have after hours business information that is not public knowledge. \$500 Cap on the Fee:The GIS is supported by our community's taxes. However, if a sunshine request requires us to customize a GIS deliverable, the costs could easily exceed \$500. Not all layers in our GIS are created and maintained in-house. We have a number of layers that are essential to our GIS that we purchase such as LiDAR and Aerial Imagery. This information is free to the public via our website. HB 50 would create a loophole for someone to gain access to a community's data at a lower cost than the expense of creating the deliverable. This loophole would also allow non-residents of a community cheaper access to data they aren't required to fund via taxes.



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: KORTNIE HUDDLESTON		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL: kortniehuddleston@gmail.com	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 3/20/2023 12:24 PM

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I agree that there should be an upper limit to fees that can be charged for GIS data, however, \$500 is too much and essentially makes it so that individual Missouri citizens cannot afford to request the information. I support a smaller maximum fee, on the order of no more than \$100 for individuals.



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WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: MELISSA JOHNSON		PHONE NUMBER: 573-634-8901	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: COLE COUNTY, MO		TITLE: GIS MANAGER	
ADDRESS: 301 E HIGH ST			
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65101
EMAIL: mjohnson@colecouny.org	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 3/20/2023 3:11 PM	

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We license our imagery and we charge \$5200 for the high resolution 6" imagery for the county in .tif format. This is approximately 1900 tiles. Alternatively, we charge \$600 for a Mr. Sid mosaic of the county. We spend quite a bit to have these data collected. The cost to the county has been around \$50,000, not taking into account the time it takes to do quality control and other tasks associated with managing this data.



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: MICHAEL DREYER		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL: mdreyer93@gmail.com	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 3/20/2023 12:21 PM
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