

HCS HBs 516, 290 & 778 -- RADIOACTIVE WASTE INVESTIGATION FUND

SPONSOR: Matthiesen

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Special Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs by a vote of 12 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules-Administrative by a vote of 8 to 0.

The following is a summary of the House Committee Substitute for HB 516.

Currently, the Department of Natural Resources must use the Radioactive Waste Investigation Fund to investigate concerns of waste exposure submitted by a local governing body. Under this bill, requests for investigations may be submitted in writing by any local governing body, community group, or individual in the jurisdiction of an area of concern. The bill allows the fund to accept gifts, bequests, and other devises of funds without limitation. This bill prevents the use of the fund for any costs related to clean up efforts.

This bill specifies that the investigation may include collection of soil, dust, and water samples from the area. If the Department suspects that radioactive contaminants are on a property owned by a governmental agency that will not grant access for the investigation, the Department can seek a warrant to access the property. If the suspected contaminants are on private property, the Department must have the owner's permission to enter and test.

Currently, there is a \$150,000 cap on expenditures for investigation costs. This bill eliminates the cap and requires the Department to seek reimbursement from the federal government for radioactive waste cleanup costs.

This bill is similar to HCS HB 1673 (2024).

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

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that the Manhattan project left dangerous radioactive material in Missouri. Testing done by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources is insufficient and people are still in danger. The Radioactive Waste Investigation Fund does not have enough money to address the issue adequately. More testing is required because radioactive materials can seep through the ground and waterways. The cost of testing has also increased.

This expands testing to water samples, which allows legitimate concerns of contamination to be investigated.

Testifying in person for the bill was Representative Matthiesen.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that the intent of the bill is fine, but there are issues with its construction. This takes control away from local governments and gives it to the Department of Natural Resources. Permission from landowners for testing would cause an intrusion inside a person's home but fails to address intrusion onto the outdoor portions of private property. At the same time, publicly-owned lands need a warrant, so there's a greater right of privacy for the government than citizens.

Testifying in person against the bill was ARMORVINE.