

SECOND REGULAR SESSION

HOUSE BILL NO. 2998

103RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY

INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE RIGGS.

3970H.011

JOSEPH ENGLER, Chief Clerk

AN ACT

To amend chapters 226, 393, and 620, RSMo, by adding thereto six new sections relating to rural economic development.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the state of Missouri, as follows:

Section A. Chapters 226, 393, and 620, RSMo, are amended by adding thereto six new sections, to be known as sections 226.035, 226.1205, 393.407, 393.1120, 393.1122, and 620.070, to read as follows:

226.035. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, when preparing the statewide transportation improvement program (STIP), the department of transportation shall prioritize projects involving rural roads and highways with high fatality rates and shall apportion funding to rural projects at the same level as the rural percentage of Missouri's population.

226.1205. 1. The department of transportation shall conduct a feasibility study on potential improvements to the upper Mississippi river basin, which shall include evaluation of the following:

(1) Increasing the navigation season on the Mississippi river to twelve-month navigation;

(2) Upgrading the existing locks to one-thousand-two-hundred-foot locks; and

(3) Adding hydropower on existing locks and dams.

2. The department shall report the findings of the study to the general assembly no later than December 1, 2026.

EXPLANATION — Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **[thus]** in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted from the law. Matter in **bold-face** type in the above bill is proposed language.

393.407. No electric corporation, independently owned utility, municipally
2 owned utility, or electric cooperative shall close or otherwise cease operation of any coal-
3 fired power plant for five years after the effective date of this section.

393.1120. At least ninety percent of the total amount of solar equipment
2 constituting real property and tangible personal property associated with a project that
3 uses solar energy directly to generate electricity shall be made in or sourced from the
4 United States including, but not limited to, solar panels, solar panel mounting racks, all
5 rare earth minerals, and associated electrical equipment such as inverters, battery
6 packs, power meters, power lines, storage equipment directly associated with solar
7 generation assets, and substations. At least ninety percent of the total amount of all
8 labor associated with the installation of a project that uses solar energy directly to
9 generate electricity shall be provided by entities that are located in and maintaining a
10 permanent place of business in the state of Missouri.

393.1122. 1. The total amount of real property associated with all solar energy
2 projects that are established in any one county in this state shall not exceed an amount
3 greater than two percent of all cropland in such county, as determined by the most
4 recent U.S. Department of Agriculture Census of Agriculture, except as authorized
5 under this section.

6 2. The county commission or other authorized governing body may increase the
7 percentage of cropland under subsection 1 of this section by order, ordinance,
8 regulation, or a vote of the residents of the county.

9 3. Any resident of the county shall have standing to bring suit in a circuit court
10 of proper venue to enforce the provisions of subsection 1 of this section against a solar
11 energy project developer if he or she believes that the cap under subsection 1 of this
12 section has been met.

620.070. 1. There is hereby established in the department of economic
2 development the "Rural Development Office", which shall have the purpose and duty to
3 advocate for and promote rural Missouri and focus on efforts designed to aid rural
4 improvements.

5 2. The rural development office shall:

6 (1) Build and foster collaborative partnerships and networks of individuals and
7 organizations to improve the coordination and effectiveness of federal, state, and other
8 programs, services, and actions affecting rural areas in this state;

9 (2) Serve as a liaison to federal, state, and local governmental agencies to ensure
10 that programs affecting rural Missourians are effectively utilized and that benefits are
11 available to all rural residents;

12 (3) Advocate on behalf of the state's rural communities;

- 13 **(4) Promote community-based problem-solving strategies;**
14 **(5) Advise the governor, agencies, organizations, and other entities on issues**
15 **affecting rural communities;**
16 **(6) Serve as a resource for private and nonprofit organizations on rural issues,**
17 **programs, and available sources of technical and financial assistance; and**
18 **(7) Conduct surveys of need and report on the needs of rural Missourians in the**
19 **following areas:**
20 **(a) Housing;**
21 **(b) Child care and early childhood education;**
22 **(c) Broadband infrastructure;**
23 **(d) Health care and wellness;**
24 **(e) Workforce development; and**
25 **(f) Community development.**
26 **3. The department of economic development shall provide administrative**
27 **support and staff as deemed necessary to assist the rural development office.**

✓