

SECOND REGULAR SESSION
HOUSE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR
HOUSE BILL NO. 2998
103RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY

3970H.02C

JOSEPH ENGLER, Chief Clerk

AN ACT

To amend chapters 226 and 620, RSMo, by adding thereto two 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 and 620, RSMo, are amended by adding thereto two new sections, to be known as sections 226.1205 and 620.070, to read as follows:

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, 2029.

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

2. The rural development office shall:

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

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.

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.**

✓