



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 2998		DATE: 4/14/2026
COMMITTEE: Agriculture		
TESTIFYING: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:		
WITNESS NAME: LISA PANNETT		PHONE NUMBER:
REPRESENTING: ARMORVINE		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO
		ZIP: 65101
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 4/14/2026 12:00 AM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 2998		DATE: 4/14/2026	
COMMITTEE: Agriculture			
TESTIFYING: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: MIKE SUTHERLAND		PHONE NUMBER: 636-297-5577	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: MISSOURI ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES		TITLE: VICE PRESIDENT	
ADDRESS: 2722 E MCCARTY ST			
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65101
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 4/14/2026 12:00 AM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 2998		DATE: 4/14/2026	
COMMITTEE: Agriculture			
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: ARNIE C. A.C. "HONEST ABE" DIENOFF		PHONE NUMBER: 314-440-9000	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: STATE PUBLIC ADVOCACY		TITLE: STATE PUBLIC ADVOCATE	
ADDRESS: PO BOX 1535			
CITY: O'FALLON		STATE: MO	ZIP: 63366
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 4/14/2026 12:00 AM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 2998		DATE: 4/14/2026	
COMMITTEE: Agriculture			
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: CYNTHIA JOCELYN BAUER		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 4/13/2026 3:35 PM	

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

I oppose the continued use of Coal-Fueled electrical power generation, in Missouri, which increases Missouri residents exposure to air pollutants, increases lung cancer rates, increases incidence of asthma in children and adults,. Leaking coal ash dumps leach Mercury from the coal ash deposits, contaminating Missouri’s groundwater, which causes contamination of agricultural crops. Restricting the number of solar collection fields to 2% of rural crop lands limits the types of farm equipment that may be used, practically, in remote areas. It forces farmers to use fossil fuels, such as CO-2 gas-producing diesel, or gasoline fueled tractors, mowers, and harvesting equipment, instead of allowing farmers to generate their own electricity, to alternatively charge electric powered vehicles, There are no environmentally favorable reasons to force farmers to travel hundreds of extra miles, annually, to fuel their vehicles with un-clean contaminating substances, in inefficient machines. I’m not sure if the goal of such a bill is to promote the use of oil drilling to produce plastics , when we are struggling to eliminate PFAF chemicals from our contaminated food supply, and groundwater, and promote inorganic fertilizers, but, there are plants that can be grown that draw nitrogen out of the air, and produce compost that replenishes and enriches the soil nutrients, and help to penetrate hard-pan soils, that can more effectively improve over-used rural soil on crop lands, instead of farmers continuing to continually produce thei same crops repeatedly that deplete the soil of nutrients. Such a bill represents out-moded ignorant concepts that will harm Missouri, not improve it.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 2998		DATE: 4/14/2026
COMMITTEE: Agriculture		
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: DEBORAH HAYS		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 4/13/2026 4:41 PM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		

This bill prioritizes outdated, high-pollution energy sources over cleaner, more affordable alternatives. Power industries are pawns in a battle on State and federal legislation. Limiting solar development not only slows economic progress but also prolongs the environmental and public health harms associated with coal that directly impact Missouri communities. This is a bad message to send to progressive companies to come to Missouri to provide future jobs and to alternative energy companies who can't trust our laws as they change all the time.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 2998		DATE: 4/14/2026
COMMITTEE: Agriculture		
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:		
WITNESS NAME: ELYSE DIANNE SCHAEFFER		PHONE NUMBER: 314-246-0178
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: MISSOURI COALITION FOR THE ENVIRONMENT		TITLE: POLICY MANAGER
ADDRESS: 725 KINGSLAND AVE SUITE 100, ST. LOUIS, MO 63130		
CITY: ST. LOUIS	STATE: MO	ZIP: 63130
EMAIL: eschaeffer@moenvironment.org	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 4/14/2026 10:31 AM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		

April 14, 2026

Chairman Doyle Justus
 House Agriculture Committee
 MO House of Representatives
 201 West Capitol Avenue, Room 114-C
 Jefferson City MO 65101

Dear Chairman Justus and Members of the Committee,

Missouri Coalition for the Environment (MCE) is a statewide, advocacy nonprofit organization that works to empower Missourians to advocate for their environment and health. House Bill 2998 would force coal-fired power plants to remain open for at least five years while severely restricting solar development to just 2% of cropland per county. This bill prioritizes outdated, high-pollution energy sources over cleaner, more affordable alternatives. Therefore, we urge the committee to vote “no” on HB 2998.

Capping solar development at just 2% of each county's cropland infringes on individual property rights, limits Missouri's economic development, and harms our environment. While individual farmers express concerns about changes to rural communities, utility scale solar developments are possible to integrate into a thriving agricultural-focused community. Through agrivoltaics, a practice where farming and solar generation coexist, many crops can be grown beneath or between rows of solar panels and some livestock can be safely grazed on the same land (1). Research also shows that shading from solar panels can help conserve water and increase crop yields in some production systems, especially in hot, dry climates (2). This can provide farmers and ranchers with numerous benefits such as diversified revenue sources and ecological advantages, while reducing land use competition (3). Limiting solar development on cropland, especially at only 2% per county, would prevent farmers from making their own choices about their own land and close off yield raising options for those seeking to diversify their holdings and improve yields simultaneously.

Solar energy is also cheaper, safer, and faster to deploy than any other form of energy available on the market today (4). President Donald Trump's own EPA declared as of September 24, 2025 that "solar panels are safe during use"(5). Additionally, further investment in renewable energy can protect the health of Missourians. Continued reliance on fossil fuels have well-documented health consequences

for Missourians. Ameren's continuous operation of the Labadie coal plant alone is responsible for the deaths of nearly 200 Missourians a year (6). Burning fossil fuels also releases ozone into the atmosphere, which is a significant contributor to asthma (7). St. Louis, which recently ranked among the cities with the highest asthma mortality rates, is particularly vulnerable to fossil fuel based pollution (8). Failing to promote clean energy production, and therefore keeping dangerous fossil fuel sources online, is thus a substantial public health risk.

Restricting solar development not only delays economic progress but also extends the environmental and health harms associated with coal, including air and water pollution that directly affect Missouri communities. For these reasons, we strongly urge you to oppose HB 2998.

Sincerely,
Elyse Dianne Schaeffer, Policy Manager
314-246-0178



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 2998		DATE: 4/14/2026	
COMMITTEE: Agriculture			
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: JEFF HOLZEM		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 4/13/2026 4:00 PM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

Solar is the cheapest form of energy. As a ratepayers at 2 locations, I am opposed to paying more to keep coal plants polluting our air and water. Our electric rates have already gone up to cover the cost of construction work in progress. Much of the new infrastructure is for data centers not the residents who will pay for them. Forcing coal plants to stay open will cost us even more. We should promote not restrict the cheapest and cleanest source of electricity.

I understand a concern with using farm land for solar, but there a lots of flat roofs and other places we do not grow food.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 2998		DATE: 4/14/2026
COMMITTEE: Agriculture		
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: JOHNELLE C LAMARQUE		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 4/13/2026 12:24 PM

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.
Limiting solar development in favor of coal is stupid. Please vote no on this bill.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 2998		DATE: 4/14/2026
COMMITTEE: Agriculture		
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: JUDITH A. LINVILLE		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 4/13/2026 9:39 PM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		

Last summer I drove through Missouri's bootheel and cotton country. I saw several fields with solar collectors and was glad to see that this was providing income for farmers and also clean power for communities. Solar energy is now the cheapest, safest, and fastest-growing form of power available. Limiting its development is a mistake, because it slows economic progress. This bill also prolongs the environmental and public health harms associated with coal, including air and water pollution that directly impact Missouri communities. Passing this into law would bring more harm than good. Please table this measure, or defeat it. Thank you.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 2998		DATE: 4/14/2026	
COMMITTEE: Agriculture			
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: SARAH BERRY		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 4/14/2026 7:13 AM	

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

This bill is being presented as rural economic development. In reality, it is a bundle of unrelated mandates that pick winners, lock in legacy systems, and restrict future flexibility—while calling it “support.”

Start with energy.

This bill prohibits the closure of coal-fired power plants for five years. That is not market stability—that is legislative interference in grid management, cost structure, and long-term planning. Utilities are being told they cannot adapt, cannot transition, and cannot respond to economic or operational realities. That risk does not disappear—it gets pushed downstream to ratepayers.

At the same time, the bill imposes heavy sourcing mandates on solar projects—ninety percent domestic equipment, ninety percent Missouri labor—while also capping solar development at two percent of county cropland unless locally overridden. That is not a coherent energy policy. That is a constraint on both sides of the equation: restrict traditional energy from evolving, and restrict alternative energy from scaling.

You are not balancing the grid. You are freezing it.

Then we move to litigation exposure.

This bill grants standing to “any resident” to sue over solar development caps. That is an open invitation to continuous legal challenges. It creates a built-in enforcement mechanism driven by private litigation, not regulatory clarity.

That means uncertainty for developers, counties, and landowners trying to operate within shifting interpretations.

Now look at what is actually labeled “rural development.”

The Rural Development Office created here has no funding mechanism for real projects, no grant authority, no direct economic tools. It is an advisory and coordination body—one FTE, no substantive investment. Meanwhile, the bill commits three million dollars to a feasibility study on the Mississippi River with a multi-year horizon.

So the only guaranteed funding in this bill is for a study—not for housing, not for broadband, not for

childcare, not for workforce development—the very needs the bill itself lists.

That is not development. That is optics.

And finally, transportation.

Requiring rural funding to match population percentage sounds equitable, but it overrides prioritization flexibility within the STIP. It introduces a formula constraint into what is supposed to be a needs-based infrastructure planning process. Fatality rates matter—but so do logistics, connectivity, freight movement, and system-wide impact.

This bill does not build a strategy. It imposes directives.

Legislative Notice:

Let the record reflect the following:

This legislation combines multiple unrelated policy areas into a single act, creating structural inconsistencies across energy, infrastructure, and economic development frameworks.

The prohibition on closure of coal-fired power plants constitutes direct legislative interference in utility operations, limiting adaptability and potentially shifting long-term costs onto consumers.

The imposition of sourcing mandates and land-use caps on solar development introduces conflicting constraints that may inhibit energy diversification and create regulatory uncertainty.

The provision granting broad standing for private litigation establishes a mechanism for ongoing legal challenges, increasing instability for local governments and project developers.

The creation of a rural development office without corresponding funding or implementation authority results in a primarily advisory structure without measurable economic impact.

The allocation of significant funds to a feasibility study, absent direct investment in identified rural needs, reflects a misalignment between stated objectives and actual resource deployment.

For these reasons, I stand in opposition.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 2998		DATE: 4/14/2026
COMMITTEE: Agriculture		
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: VICTOR POLAND		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 4/13/2026 11:48 AM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		

We shouldn't be forcing our state to use an outdated, high pollution energy source (coal) when there are other more advanced and lower pollution technology sources available. Surrounding states (Iowa and Kansas) utilize wind and solar to a great extent and this is an opportunity to use solar in our state. Please don't hamstring this technology in favor of coal which only prolongs health harms to Missouri citizens.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 2998		DATE: 4/14/2026
COMMITTEE: Agriculture		
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:		
WITNESS NAME: PAMELA HARLAN		PHONE NUMBER: 573-751-0273
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION		TITLE:
ADDRESS: PO BOX 270		
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO
		ZIP: 65101
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 4/14/2026 12:00 AM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 2998		DATE: 4/14/2026	
COMMITTEE: Agriculture			
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: VIKRAM LAKHANPAL		PHONE NUMBER: 573-279-4354	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: MOST POLICY INITIATIVE		TITLE: LEGISLATIVE POLICY FELLOW	
ADDRESS: 238 E HIGH ST			
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65101
EMAIL: vikram@mostpolicyinitiative.org	ATTENDANCE: In-Person	SUBMIT DATE: 4/13/2026 5:15 PM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

Hello Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, my name is Dr. Vikram Lakhanpal, and I am a Legislative Policy Fellow with MOST Policy Initiative. We provide non-partisan research services to the Missouri state legislature at the request of lawmakers. Today I am here to testify for informational purposes about HB 2998, specifically the provisions related to hydropower and solar power. There are about 92,000 dams in the United States, which control water flow and elevation. Of these, about 3% generate electricity from the flow of water. Hydropower capacity in the U.S. is about 80 gigawatts and provides 6% of electricity. Retrofitting all non-powered dams for electricity generation would increase the U.S.'s hydropower capacity by about 12 gigawatts, a 15% increase. Many non-powered dams are not viable options for retrofitting for hydropower. Retrofits can interfere with the dam's original purpose, change the flow of water in ways that harm the surrounding ecosystem, or require more construction to connect the dam to the electrical grid. For these reasons, 77% of retrofit projects that were proposed between 2000 and 2020 did not become operational. Most of these projects ended before construction began, typically when the costs of adding electrical generation exceed the revenue and other benefits from the added power. Between 2006 and 2016, 74% of non-powered dam retrofitting projects were on locks and dams on the Ohio River. On the Mississippi River, the locks and dam in Marion County, Missouri, and Adams County, Illinois, recently received a permit from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to study the feasibility of a retrofitting project that would have a capacity of 15 megawatts, and they plan to apply for a construction license in 2027.

Regarding solar projects: In the Midwest, seventy percent of commercial solar projects are located on what was previously commercial agricultural land. The National Lab of the Rockies predicts that solar panels would require up to 0.5% of the total land area of the contiguous United States if the U.S. reaches zero carbon emissions from the electrical grid by 2050. Missouri is predicted to need 0.4% of its total land area for solar energy. Previously developed areas and non-vegetative lands such as quarries are suitable land for solar projects. If solar panels were restricted to these areas, they would require 6.4% of that land.

Thank you for your time, I'd be happy to answer any questions, and I have copies of these Science Notes if anyone would like them.