



**MISSOURI SENATE**  
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## The Cauthorn Report

JEFFERSON CITY, MO – Senator John Cauthorn and his Senate colleagues this week moved an omnibus ag bill to the governor’s desk. Among several provisions, SB 740 increases the value of tax credits available to farmers investing in “new generation” agribusinesses such as biodiesel and ethanol production.

“Missouri was built on a foundation of agriculture, which, hitched with today’s technology, is now supporting a range of growth opportunities in agribusiness,” Cauthorn said. “This legislation fosters this growth by spurring broader participation in value-added agriculture ventures.”

The ag development bill also allows for the creation of “growers’ districts,” which would be utilized to concentrate on producing agricultural products of use to the pharmaceutical industry.

Also moving on the ag front is Cauthorn’s legislation expanding participation in the Missouri Rural Economic Stimulus Authority. Having cleared the Senate earlier, SB 1155 cleared a House agriculture panel this week and is slated to move to the full body. House passage sends Cauthorn’s initiative to the governor.

“We’ve added new definitions like “development facility” and “new generation processing entity” to increase market opportunities,” Cauthorn said.

Cauthorn’s resolution asking voters to decide every ten years whether or not to retain a statewide 1/8-cent sales tax serving as the conservation department’s main revenue stream cleared a Senate panel this week and now goes to the full Senate. As SJR 47 would change the state’s constitution, voters would first be the final voice on whether to put the 10-year funding review into place. If so desired, voters would then decide on extending or terminating the tax in 10 years.

“As things are now, the department’s funding stands to increase by nearly 6 percent thanks to the strengthening state economy and. I don’t think the department has demonstrated a level of accountability to taxpayers that warrants what amount to automatic budget hikes,” Cauthorn said. “Really, no state department should have their appropriations process on auto pilot like conservation has it now.”

Cauthorn’s legislation ensuring the right to “hand fish” for catfish and carp during June and July (SB 1153) cleared the Senate and is on the way to the House for consideration.

“Some of our city-bred legislators laughed at this one, but hand fishing is a genuine recreational activity based on customs tracing back to the days when Indian tribes roamed the lands,” Cauthorn said.

As Cauthorn predicted, the governor this week vetoed the legislature's tort reform measure, HB 1304, which curbs the practice of moving trials to areas known for large jury awards and reinstates damage award caps. Most feel these civil court reforms will curb rising malpractice insurance premiums driven up by unreasonably high jury awards and in turn help keep doctors in Missouri. The governor, who vetoed a similar tort reform measure last year, said he would have considered signing this year's version if the General Assembly had also offered legislation specifically reforming the malpractice insurance industry.

"However," Cauthorn noted, "as widely reported throughout the course of the session, just such a companion bill is in the works (HB 1305), has cleared the House and is now before a Senate panel.

Information on these and all legislative proposals in the legislature can be found by browsing the Senate's website: [www.senate.state.mo.us](http://www.senate.state.mo.us). To find Senator Cauthorn's web page, start from the main Senate page, click the green "Senators" link and scroll down the member list to the "John Cauthorn" link.

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