

Report from Senator David G. Klindt

March 30, 2006

Beware the “tofu-slurping mobs”

The Senate Commerce, Energy, and Environment Committee, which I chair, voted this week to send a dam safety bill to the floor for further debate. The bill is a reaction to the failure of the dam at Tom Sauk in southeast Missouri. As originally filed, the bill was a serious “overreach” by the Department of Natural Resources. At my insistence, the bill has been changed to exempt agricultural dams.

We need to make sure DNR focuses its resources on the dams that might pose a risk to life and property. The last thing we need is to have DNR inspectors fussing over dams on the farm which, even if they did burst, would do little more than flood a cornfield or chase a heifer down the hill.

The committee also this week heard testimony about my Broadband Protection Act – SB 1092. This bill prohibits cities from trying to regulate or tax the lawful content flowing over a broadband Internet connection. Technology is changing rapidly, and for the better. We don’t need a bunch of self-appointed gatekeepers slowing things down.

My top legislative priority – repealing the sales tax on farm fuel – had a hearing in the House Agriculture Policy Committee this week. I’ve asked the highly respected chairman of that committee - Representative Peter Myers of Sikeston - to handle the bill in the House. I feel pretty good about the bill’s chances.

My bill to repeal the motor vehicle safety inspections was heard by the Senate Transportation Committee this week. Opposition was fierce, mostly from people who are currently making a lot of money off the current law. I don’t know the chances of getting SB 1166 all the way through the process, but I do know it’s the right thing to do. Motor vehicle safety should be everybody’s responsibility every day, not somebody else’s job once every two years.

Finally, I was disturbed to read this week an editorial in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* that was dripping with disgust for those of us who choose to live in outstate Missouri. Here’s the opening paragraph: “It must be scary living in outstate Missouri. You never know when tofu-slurping mobs of big-city animal nuts will take away your God-given right to hunt and fish, secretly neuter your faithful bird dog and sneak onto your property to snap pictures of your kennels.”

Folks like us understand it’s not a good idea to get into a war of words with people who buy ink by the barrel, but I need to set the record straight. Living out here in the “sticks” isn’t the least bit scary. But they can’t blame us for being a little bit worried about what would happen if the “tofu-slurping mobs” were actually in charge of anything.

Thanks for all you do and have a good week!

