



THE STOUFFER REPORT

Senator Bill Stouffer
Senate District 21

Capitol Building, Room 332
Jefferson City, MO 65101

For the Week of:
Aug. 7, 2006

Contact: Aaron Baker
(573) 751-1507

Brush Growth Along State Highways Needs to Be Mowed

Due to many letters and phone calls over the past few months, I have called upon the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) to clear the brush along highways in rural Missouri. As chairman of the Senate Transportation Committee and a farmer, issues involving Missouri's rural roads are of utmost importance to me. Brush growth creates eyesores and endangers motorists, and I am particularly troubled by MoDOT's failure to clear excessive brush.

High brush growth along state right-of-ways is unsafe for a number of reasons. Motorists cannot see at intersections when brush grows too high. Further, high brush attracts wildlife, such as deer, and offers hiding places for these animals, which will often jump out of the right-of-ways at the last moment and cause traffic accidents. Although many counties in rural Missouri have taken the initiative to mow county-road right-of-ways, MoDOT has failed to do so.

In 2004, MoDOT staff opted to conduct a final mow-out every other year. Officials have said they did not clear brush in 2005 because of high fuel costs, but they have promised to clear the dangerous growth this year and treat it to prevent further growth. I believe excessive growth will cost even more now because it will be too overgrown to simply mow it.

I have had many meetings with MoDOT expressing my concerns to mow out right-of-ways. Meanwhile, I encourage residents to visit the MoDOT Web site and report areas that need to be mowed or other roadway concerns. All right-of-ways should be cleared up to 30 feet from the white stripe on the side of the roads.

MoDOT workers put in long, hard hours for the people of Missouri; it is the bureaucracy making these unwise decisions. Please give your hardworking construction workers a break. Nevertheless, excessive brush growth along highways is a danger that needs to be addressed immediately. The more people who call MoDOT, the more state officials are going to feel the pressure. Residents can voice their concerns at www.modot.mo.gov/asp/repair.htm or by calling 1-888-275-6636.

If you have questions or comments about this or any other issue, please call toll free (866) 768-3987 or by email at bstouffer@senate.mo.gov.

-END-