



*Nothing is politically right
that is morally wrong.*

MISSOURI SENATE
JEFFERSON CITY

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is the firmest friend of truth.*

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Senate Committee Unanimously Advances Economic Development Package *Public Testimony Largely in Support of Provisions*

JEFFERSON CITY – The Missouri Senate Committee on Economic Development, Tourism and Local Government unanimously voted in favor to advance House Bill 1 during the special session called by the governor after he vetoed a similar bill with a fiscal note four times as big. Sen. John Griesheimer, R-Washington, is the committee chairman and handler of the bill in the Senate.

“I want to thank all the committee members for their support,” he said. “I’m hopeful we’ll continue working together in a bipartisan fashion to ensure passage of the bill.”

Griesheimer said the main provision of the economic development package expands the cap from \$12 million to \$40 million on the Quality Jobs Program created in 2005.

“The Quality Jobs Program has created more than 12,500 jobs in our state that pay an average of \$46,000 and at least half the employees’ healthcare benefits,” he said. “We want to build on this success and we need to do it now because there are at least 3,000 new jobs depending on us to act now.”

House Bill 1 also creates the Distressed Areas Land Assemblage Tax Credit Act to assist developers in building new communities in distressed or vacated urban neighborhoods. The tax credit would cover half the costs and all of the interest for acquiring eligible parcels of land. Credits could be received for up to five years after purchasing qualifying parcels and be carried forward for up to six years or sold. The bill funds the credit up to \$10 million annually, and enacts a program lifetime cap of \$95 million. The distressed area must have at least 50 acres available for redevelopment and no more than 75 percent of it can be redeveloped by the same person. There are currently more than 20,000 vacant lots and more than 5,000 vacant buildings in St. Louis City.

Griesheimer said more than half a dozen residents from the neighborhoods that would benefit from the program testified in support.

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“The people from these communities simply want a better tomorrow for their families and neighbors,” Griesheimer said. “They believe the Distressed Areas Land Assemblage Act will work and make their communities more prosperous and safe. Rebuilding block-by-block isn’t winning the battle so we need to offer real change on a large scale.”

Other notable provisions of the bill include:

- Allows for the sale or resale of tickets at any price to sporting and entertainment events.
- Defines “Greenfield area” as it relates to Tax Increment Financing projects.
- Allows charitable organizations to participate and benefit from tax credit programs.
- Creates and funds up to \$3 million for the Qualified Beef Tax Credit Act to encourage Missouri cattle producers to keep and finish feeder calves in Missouri.
 - An expert estimated \$600 million in economic benefits are lost by selling calves to operations in other states to be finished.
- Increases available Film Production Tax Credits to \$4.5 million.
- Expands Enhanced Enterprise Zones.
- Allows new vocational school districts to be created.
- Creates the Missouri Workforce Development Board.
- Continues the Community College New Job Training Program.

The bill was reported to the Senate during a technical session today. The Senate will next convene at 1 p.m., Wed., Aug. 29, 2007, to debate House Bill 1 — as well as House Bill 2, which provides revised performance bond language to allow the state to advance with the maintenance and rebuilding of more than 800 Missouri bridges.

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