



Senator  
**Bill Stouffer**

**DISTRICT 21**

Senator Bill Stouffer – Cultivating Rural Missouri.

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## The Stouffer Report: 50 Cents Does So Much

In this era of \$4 a gallon gasoline, Missouri is making some fuel of its own.

In 1990, the General Assembly created a scrap tire fee. This was done because so many illegal scrap tire piles were cropping up in Missouri that these dangerous eyesores were creating a health hazard. Establishing a fee also allowed officials to manage the proper disposal of scrap tires.

When you buy new tires, [you pay 50 cents per tire](#), which goes toward properly getting rid of your old ones. Your old tires – if they are properly disposed of – end up being made useful again.

In Odessa, one business turns old tires into fuel. In Macon, they are recycled for use in playgrounds.

Recently, 30,000 tires were hauled in from one site near Higginsville to go to the University of Missouri Powerplant in Columbia for fuel. According to the Missouri Department of Natural Resources (DNR), 65 percent of the five million tires legally-generated every year and tires that are taken out of illegal dumps are used to make tire-derived fuel in Missouri.

Keeping the state free of illegal tire dumps is also important for the environment and to your individual health. Old tires are breeding grounds for mosquitoes, which carry West Nile Virus. Health experts say this could be a dangerous year for West Nile, because of all the flooding we have seen. Some counties have laws on the books that prohibit you from keeping old tires on your property because of these health risks. If four- or five-year-old tires sitting in a field, filling with water and gathering mosquitoes are bad, then imagine what a hazard

an illegal dump with thousands of tires is doing. DNR estimates over 300,000 scrap tires are still in illegal dumps. They also estimate there could be another 500,000 tires that have yet to be discovered.

As I mentioned earlier, the state started collecting a scrap tire fee in 1990. The fee was extended for the first time in 1999. In 2004, it expired, but was resurrected the following year. Right now, the current phase of the scrap tire fee will expire in 2010. The best part about this is that the 50 cent fee has stayed the same throughout its 18-year history. In 1995, a couple of Senate bills came about that made some changes to DNR's scrap tire efforts. The fee was redistributed, giving 65 percent for tire site clean ups, 25 percent for administration, 5 percent to educational programs on solid waste management, and 5 percent for grants. These grants help schools, parks, day care centers, other not-for-profit and government organizations pay for recycled rubber surfaces for playgrounds, running tracks, walking trails, or other projects.

So, as you can see, tires serve more purposes than just getting your vehicles down the road. From fuel to safe playgrounds for your kids and grandkids, your old tires are helping Missouri be a better place for all of us.

*Senator Stouffer serves the counties of Carroll, Chariton, Cooper, Howard, Lafayette, Macon, Ray, Saline, and a part of Clay.*

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

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