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Contact: Sen. Joan Bray – 573.751.2514

Missouri Lawmakers Approve Green Energy Legislation on Final Day of Session

Bill Takes Big Steps Toward Energy Conservation

JEFFERSON CITY – Sen. Joan Bray, D-University City, applauded her legislative colleagues for approving an expansive “green energy” bill on the final day of the 2008 legislative session. Senate Bill 1181 modifies and creates provisions pertaining to energy efficiency and energy regulation. Sen. Bray says the bill represents a major step forward in Missouri toward a more environmentally friendly energy policy.

“Most of the world’s scientists have been warning us about the consequences of our wasteful use of natural resources for years, and I’m afraid we’re beginning to see some of those dire predictions come true,” Sen. Bray said. “We may not be able to do much about the melting polar ice caps or the rising levels of CO₂ in our atmosphere, but I think we can take some reasonable first steps toward addressing these issues at the state level by promoting conservation, better energy efficiency standards and changes in building design that will conserve energy.”

SB 1181 takes a number of steps forward in making Missouri a “greener” state:

- The measure creates an income tax deduction for either the cost of a home energy audit or for the cost of implementing any of the recommendations made in an energy audit, or for both activities. The deduction is limited to \$1,000 per taxpayer per year with a \$2,000 lifetime limit;

- The bill creates minimum energy efficiency standards for certain new products sold or installed within the state. That standard will not exceed the federal Energy Star standards or other federal minimum energy efficiency standards and will be updated every three years. Product manufacturers will have to certify to the state that their products meet the new standards and will have to label their products as such;
- SB 1181 requires state departments to develop strategies to secure grants established under the federal Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007. These grants could fund green jobs, the production of renewable fuels, higher energy efficiency of products, buildings and vehicles, and more research and development of renewable energy technologies;
- The act allows eligible alternative energy operations to receive low-interest loans through the linked deposit loan program. Qualifying alternative sources of energy include solar, wind, hydroelectric and qualified biomass;
- For 2009 and each year thereafter, during the seven-day period of April 19-25, all sales of Energy Star certified new appliances will be exempt from state sales taxes;
- The measure requires the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to establish guidelines for green cleaning programs and environmentally sensitive cleaning products;
- It creates a professorship in energy conservation and creates the Studies in Energy Conservation Fund to be administered by the Department of Higher Education;
- SB 1181 also requires new construction of or major renovations to state buildings to include projections of energy savings as a result of meeting new state minimum energy efficiency standards and allocates state money to achieve those goals; and
- It requires the Missouri Energy Task Force to reconvene at least once a year to review progress made toward meeting the recommendations made in its final report and to report the results to the governor and the General Assembly.

“I think these measures, taken together, will move our state in the right direction toward a more energy-conscious and energy-efficient world,” Sen. Bray said. “Other states have gone much further in promoting energy conservation and the use of alternative sources of energy, and I think we will catch up to them eventually. I think we have to in order to leave a healthy planet for our children and grandchildren.”

SB 1181 has been sent to the governor to be signed into law. July 14 is the last day for the governor to sign bills, most of which take effect August 28.