

State Senator Robert Mayer The Mayer Memo

Senator Robert Mayer - Serving Butler, Dunklin, New Madrid, Pemiscot, Ripley, Stoddard & Wayne Counties



Column For The Week Of: February 1, 2010

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Standing Up To Protect Missouri's Farmers

Throughout my time in Missouri government, I have stood up for our state's farms at every chance I've gotten. Part of the reason for this is that I'm a cattle farmer myself, and I know just how hard it is to make a living off of the land. When you're out there fighting the weather, the soil, the livestock or the equipment (and sometimes all of these at once), the last thing you want to do when you finally get home is struggle with your own government. After all, that's what you elected me to do.

This year I'm proud that the Missouri Senate's first order of business this legislative session was to pass [Senate Concurrent Resolution 35](#), which rejects the Missouri State Tax Commission's recent decision to increase some of the values assigned to agricultural land in Missouri.

Every two years, the State Tax Commission is required by law to publish land values for the state's agricultural and horticultural land. In 2009 we saw a devastating ice storm in January, an excessively wet spring, and delayed harvests due to a brutally wet October. The State Tax Commission decided to top that year off by changing the farmer's land valuation, which resulted in an approximate 11.5 percent overall increase in taxes. Like they say, when it rains, it pours!

Now that the resolution disapproving the tax increase has been approved in the Senate by an overwhelming vote, it goes to the House of Representatives for their consideration. The law says that the Legislature has 60 legislative days to reject the State Tax Commission's decision, or the new valuations will take effect January 1, 2011. I'd encourage you to call your state representative and make sure they are on board with this resolution.

While we're on the subject of farming, my [Senate Bill 604](#), which prohibits large users of water from disrupting the normal irrigation activities of large farms in the Southeast Missouri Regional Water District. This proposed legislation gives the attorney general the power to file an injunction to halt any disruption that could affect our farms, as long as that injunction doesn't harm public health or safety. This bill has passed the Agriculture, Food Production and Outdoor Resources Committee, where it went on to receive first round approval on the Senate Floor.

As the session progresses, I will keep you informed of the issues that matter to you most in Jefferson City. Please don't hesitate to contact my office if you have comments or questions about this week's column or any other matter involving state government. You can reach my office by phone at 1-877-291-5584.

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