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*****PRESS RELEASE*****

Senator Crowell's Bill to Block Tax Commission's Decision to Increase Taxes on Farmers Passed by Missouri Senate

JEFFERSON CITY — The Missouri Senate today voted 30 – 3 to approve Sen. Crowell's, R - Cape Girardeau, Senate Concurrent Resolution to prevent the Missouri State Tax Commission from increasing taxes on farmers by raising the value on farm assessments. In December, the commission approved new "productive values" for agricultural land which would raise taxes substantially on the best farmland in the state.

"This vote today says that we are committed to protecting our farmers," said Sen. Crowell. "Farmers are the backbone of Missouri's economy and it is the state's job to provide every avenue possible for farmers to succeed, not to create roadblocks."

The Commission's decision would increase farmland grades 1 through 4 productivity values, which are the evaluation of the land's potential earnings and are used to calculate property taxes, by almost 29 percent. For a property that produces the most dependable crop yields, their valuation would rise from \$985 per acre to \$1,270 an acre under the commission's decision.

Both the Director for Missouri's Department of Agriculture and The Missouri Farm Bureau have disagreed with the Tax Commission's decision, warning that a tax increase could be extremely damaging to Missouri's farmers as they work in this struggling economy.

Sen. Crowell continued, "Missouri farmers are seeing increases in production costs and an unstable market; they do not need more financial burdens from the state. The Senate's action today ensures farmers are not handcuffed by the state as they work hard every day to make ends meet."

The Missouri House of Representative voted 140 – 15 on Wednesday to approve a similar resolution. Both resolutions will need to be joined in order to pass an identical measure to block the tax increase. State statute gives the General Assembly 60 days from the beginning of session to complete this process.

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