

Governor Holden Condemns Passing of Senate Bill 36

Governor Holden Blasts The Missouri House of Representatives for Passing the Most Damaging Anti-Environment Bill In Decades.

Governor Bob Holden condemned the Missouri House of Representatives on Thursday, May 1, for passing "extremist legislation that will cause severe damage to our environment." Senate Bill 36, a vehicle for a cluster of anti-environmental proposals, poses an imminent threat to Missouri's water, air, land and natural resources. The bill was loaded with 13 additional amendments during House floor debate on Wednesday, April 30, 2003, and is now a compilation of over ten separate legislative proposals covering subjects such as water quality, citizen rights, gravel mining and the setting of health and environmental standards.

Ironically, only a week ago, representatives from 27 conservation groups around the state came together in Jefferson City on April 23 urging state legislators to reject this broad attack on Missouri's environment.

Senate Bill (SB) 36 would:

- prevent citizens impacted by chemical spills from learning the details of these events, thereby depriving them of the right to recover damages for legitimate impacts to their health and property.
- freeze Missouri's environmental regulations as of August 28, 2003; even new regulations required to comply with federal laws would have to go through a cumbersome process established by this bill, potentially resulting in federal takeover of Missouri's environmental regulatory authority. This provision would prevent the state from addressing health and safety issues, such as phosphorus contamination of lakes in southwest Missouri.
- roll back existing laws governing those who mine

gravel from the state's streams; the bill would exempt 75% of gravel mining operations from the current permitting requirements, making it more difficult to prevent damage to fish habitat, private property, public infrastructure and water quality.

SB 36 would undercut one of Missouri's top three industries: tourism, which depends upon our state's natural resources to attract visitors and generate economic activity. "The Missouri Department of Conservation states that Missourians and non-residents spend about \$2 billion annually related to fishing and wildlife recreation, which supports some 54,800 jobs. This vital part of our economy, as well as the integrity of each of our fragile streams, would be seriously threatened by the impact of this bill," said Norman Leppo, Missouri Smallmouth Alliance.

It's hard to understand how anyone could think this bill benefits Missouri. This bill would affect every Missourian and impair their ability to enjoy a healthy and clean environment.

What Can Be Done To Stop It

The fight is not over! The bill will now go back to the Senate. With 10 days left till the Missouri legislative session closes, many letters and phone calls need to go to each Senator.