

# LEGISLATIVE REPORT



## 2023 Missouri Session Week Sixteen April 28, 2023

With only two weeks remaining in session, members are concentrating efforts on amending bills that are far enough along in the process that stand a chance of passage.

The Senate accomplished two major goals this week. First, all fifteen operating budget bills were Third Read, setting the stage for conference committee meetings to begin next week to work out the differences between the House and Senate versions of the bill. The second notable activity this week was passage of a version of initiative petition reform, a feat that many did not believe would be achieved because of partisan differences.

Momentum to improve Interstate 70 continues as the Senate dedicated extensive floor time to debate the FY 2024 budget and the FY 2023 supplemental budget. Included in the Senate's latest version includes \$2.8 billion to widen I-70 to at least three lanes in both directions from Blue Springs to Wentzville. The House's version recently appropriated \$859 million to add widen portions of I-70. The House and Senate will negotiate budget differences ahead of the constitutional budget deadline of May 5.

The Senate Emerging Issues Committee convened to discuss HJR 37, sponsored by Don Mayhew (R-Crocker). Upon voter approval, the proposed constitutional amendment would require that the State Road Fund be subject to appropriation by the General Assembly, rather than standing appropriated without legislative action. A private advocate provided supporting testimony while Patrick McKenna, Director of MO Department of Transportation, Missourians for Transportation Investment and many others opposed the bill. No action was taken on the measure.

Electricity sales tax exemptions and EV charging stations generated discussion as the House Ways and Means Committee discussed SB 275. The bill creates a state and local sales tax exemption for utilities, equipment, and materials used to generate or transmit electricity. The Associated Industries of MO, Ameren, Meta Platforms, Evergy, MO Electric Cooperatives, MO Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and Dogwood Energy supported the bill while the Missouri Municipal

League opposed the bill. During committee discussion, a committee substitute was adopted to allow consolidated sewer districts' boards of trustees to pay members up to \$100 for each attended meeting. Additionally, the committee substitute:

- modifies the definition of "large water public utility" to include a public utility that regularly provides water service, sewer service, or a combination of either to more than 8,000 customer connections and specifies that a large water public utility may file with the Public Service Commission for a Water and Sewer Infrastructure Rate Adjustment;
- creates the "Missouri Nuclear Clean Power Act" and allows electrical corporations to charge for services based on the costs of certain construction projects in progress;
- creates growth project discount rates for gas corporations; sets an assessed value for solar property; reduces fire hydrant inspections to once a year; and provides the PSC may request an additional 30 days for good cause showing, if the PSC does not issue a decision within 30 days, the application shall automatically be approved.

During committee discussion, Rep. Tony Lovasco (R-O'Fallon) further amended the committee substitute to include HB 184, which requires political subdivisions that require the installation of EV charging stations and requires certain businesses to pay the costs associated with the installation. Additionally, Rep. Lovasco included HB 651, which seeks to modify the definition of "video service" for provisions of law relating to video service providers to include the definition of streaming content, and included protections for people that are hooked up to private septic or well systems that have no health violations, from having to hook up to a municipal supply. Once modified, the committee passed the bill by a 7-3 vote.

Public water utility connections saw discussion with HB 1152. The bill modifies the definition of "large water public utility" to include a public utility that regularly provides water service, sewer service, or a combination of either to more than 8,000 customer connections and specifies that a large water public utility may file with the Public Service Commission for a Water and Sewer Infrastructure Rate Adjustment. The bill also requires the PSC to take action within 6 months in the event a large water and sewer utility purchases a small utility. A State Public Advocate, Missouri American Water, Missouri Chambers of Commerce and Industry, and Confluence River Liberty Utilities provided supporting testimony. No opposing testimony was presented to the committee. No action was taken on the measure.

Broadband development council saw discussed by the Senate Commerce, Consumer Protection, Energy, and the Environment Committee for HB 461. The bill establishes a 21-member Broadband Development Council to explore ways to expand broadband across the state and removes the mapping requirements as they are already being handled by the Department of Economic Development. No supporting testimony was presented. A citizen testified in opposition and the committee took no action on the measure.

Please see below for bills of interest:

**Bills of Interest:**

Emergency Responders

<https://www.govwatch.net/report/27445>

Water

<https://www.govwatch.net/report/27446>

Right of Way

<https://www.govwatch.net/report/27447>

Transportation

<https://www.govwatch.net/report/27448>

Workforce Development

<https://www.govwatch.net/report/27449>

Main Track

<https://www.govwatch.net/report/27454>

Miscellaneous

<https://www.govwatch.net/report/27455>