

HCS HB 722 -- PAPER AND PLASTIC BAGS

SPONSOR: Shaul

COMMITTEE ACTIONS: Voted "Do Pass with Amendments" by the Standing Committee on Energy and the Environment by a vote of 11 to 2. Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Select Committee on Utilities by a vote of 9 to 1.

This bill specifies that all merchants, itinerant vendors, and peddlers have the option to provide customers with a paper or plastic bag for any item or good purchased. No political subdivision can impose any ban, fee or tax upon the use of paper or plastic bags for packaging any item or good purchased.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that a business should have the option to provide customers with any option it chooses for packaging purchased goods. It should be the business' and consumer's choice on the method they would like for packaging. However, if there is to be a law or ordinance regarding the use of paper or plastic bags, it should be a statewide law so that businesses in multiple jurisdictions can have consistency.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Shaul; Missouri Retailers Association; Missouri Petroleum Marketers and Convenience Store Association; Americans For Prosperity; Missouri Chamber Of Commerce And Industry; Missouri Restaurant Association; Missouri Grocers Association; and Karen Strange, Artpho Limited Productions.

OPPOSERS: Those who oppose the bill say that local governments should have the ability to regulate the use of paper or plastic bags. Plastic bags can clog stormwater systems, harm wildlife and have other harmful effects on the environment.

Testifying against the bill were Carolyn Amparan, Missouri Chapter of The Sierra Club; Terry Ganey; Melanie Cheney, MO River Relief; and Mary Lehmann.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill provided information on the plastic bags used by grocers and other businesses.

Testifying on the bill was Phil Rozenski, Novolex & American Progressive Bag Alliance.