

HCS HB 340 -- NET METERING

SPONSOR: Fitzwater (49)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Utilities by a vote of 8 to 4. Voted "Do Pass" by the Committee on Rules - Administrative Oversight by a vote of 11 to 3.

This bill transfers certification authority of an energy resource as "renewable" from the Department of Natural Resources to the Department of Economic Development.

This bill also provides that an energy supplier may charge a customer-generator a recurring monthly grid usage fee not to exceed 75% of the supplier's recurring monthly fixed customer or service availability charge to other customers. A customer-generator shall still have the right to use net metering to offset all or more of a customer-generator's electrical energy requirements, and be credited for any excess.

The bill additionally makes the sale of qualified electrical energy generation units subject to all applicable merchandising and consumer protection laws of Chapter 407, RSMo, and requires adequate surge protection for a customer-generator's generation unit.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that the bill addresses particular cost and infrastructure concerns that rural co-ops have regarding net metering. Supporters argued that rural cooperatives are not profit driven with higher fixed costs, and so other customers must bear the costs of an increased electrical load due to net metering for the benefit of individual members. Supporters also pointed out that the bill's safety requirements protect home owners and first responders.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Fitzwater; Association of Missouri Electric Cooperatives; Fred Hertwig; James Ludden; Missouri Energy Development Association; Missouri Association of Municipal Utilities; City Utilities of Springfield, MO; and Missouri Farm Bureau.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that solar energy, and other forms of net metering, is a growing and significant industry in Missouri that should be encouraged not discriminated against. The bill was drafted without input from the solar energy sector, and thus represents a targeted attack of environmental businesses in the state.

Testifying against the bill were Renew Missouri Advocates; Zachary

Wyatt-Gomez, Missouri Solar Energy Industry Association; Joe Bachant, On Behalf Of Naacp Per Great Rivers Envo Law Center; Ted Lesiecki, Sunsmart Technologies; Mark Walter, Sun Solar; Frances Babb; Jeffrey Owens; David Pratt; and James Babb.