

HCS HB 2496 -- TOWING TASK FORCE

SPONSOR: Reiboldt

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Transportation by a vote of 7 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee by Rules- Administrative Oversight by a vote of 10 to 0.

This bill creates a "Towing Task Force" within the Missouri Department of Transportation. Membership shall include, but is not limited to, one member of the General Assembly appointed by the President Pro Tem of the Senate, one member of the General Assembly appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and one member appointed by the Governor. Leadership positions, duties and regulations of the task force are specified in the bill. The task force will make recommendations to the department by March 1, 2020, concerning maximum towing rates for nonconsensual towing including storage fees, the investigation of overcharges for towing, processes for consumer complaints and civil penalties to use to enforce towing regulations, and relevant information to provide on invoices for nonconsensual towing operations. Other recommendations are also specified in the bill. These recommendations will apply to tows involving vehicles with a gross weight rating of 26,000 lbs. or more. The bill prohibits the use of per-pound billing and also limits civil penalty options chosen by the commission to under \$5,000 per violation.

The task force will expire on January 1, 2021.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that there is broad agreement that a system for pricing emergency tows fairly is needed to prevent overcharging for removal of accidents involving large trucks.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Reiboldt; Mike Matousek, Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association; and the Missouri Trucking Association.

OPPOSERS: Those who oppose the bill say that the task force could cost money and involve the creation of unnecessary regulations. There are a few bad actors causing majority of issues, but trucking companies are currently allowed to choose a tow company if they have the ability.

Testifying against the bill were Dwight Scharnhorst, The Missouri Group and the Towing & Recovery Association of Missouri.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say modern technology involving all properly licensed tow companies can clear highways

extremely efficiently and provide fair pricing using computer programs and advanced communication systems.

Testifying on the bill were Alan Brasher, Autoreturn; Mike Watson, Missouri State Highway Patrol; and the Missouri Department of Transportation.