

HCS HB 1804 -- DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

SPONSOR: Pietzman

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Conservation and Natural Resources by a vote of 9 to 1. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules-Administrative Oversight by a vote of 6 to 3.

The following is a summary of the House Committee Substitute for HB 1804.

This bill requires the Department of Natural Resources to provide assistance to small businesses applying for permits by designating one or more people who are trained in the process to assist applicants. The staff must be trained in the permit application process, but not involved in the review or approval of permits. No later than January 1, 2021, the department must post on its website exemplars of completed and approved permit applications.

If the department fails to provide the required assistance, the department must reduce the fees associated with each permit it issues to the applicant by an amount equal to the costs the applicant incurred to seek assistance from outside sources.

Any permit issued by the department that does not provide for a public comment period and the is completed by the applicant must be approved or denied in writing within 30 days. If not, it will be deemed approved. A written denial must include the citation of law under which the permit was denied.

This bill is similar to HCS HB 1158 (2019).

The following is a summary of the public testimony from the committee hearing. The testimony was based on the introduced version of the bill.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that for smaller companies and individuals, the permit process is cumbersome and complicated. The department should be more helpful and forthcoming with what information is necessary to complete the permit applications and with alternatives for an applicant.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Pietzman and Associated Industries of Missouri.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say that the department

works hard to assist permit applicants, but technical assistance needs to be clarified to ensure the department knows what assistance is expected. The department has also made a great effort to reduce its backlog of permits and issue permits in a timely manner.

Testifying on the bill were John Madras, Sierra Club; and the Missouri Department of Natural Resources.