

HB 2193 -- BURN BAN ORDERS

SPONSOR: Rowland

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Committee on Tourism and Natural Resources by a vote of 19 to 0.

Currently, only counties of the first, second, or fourth classification are authorized to issue burn ban orders under specified circumstances. This bill authorizes the county commission in all noncharter counties to issue burn ban orders under specified circumstances.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that last year the General Assembly passed legislation allowing the county commissions in first, second, and fourth class counties to issue burn bans. The bill would allow third class counties, which is the majority of the state, to issue burn bans as well.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Rowland; Missouri Farm Bureau; and Missouri Association of Counties.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say that the current law requires the use of the U.S. Drought Monitor Index as a trigger for issuing a burn ban, but the Keetch-Byram Drought Index may be a better indicator for when to issue a ban. Also, wildfires used to be a problem in the state. In the 1930's and 1940's, over one-third of the state would be on fire in the spring. The Department of Conservation has worked with rural fire departments to prevent and suppress wildfires.

Testifying on the bill were Randy Cole, Missouri Fire Marshal; and Department of Conservation.