

HCS HB 429 -- NATURAL GAS SAFETY

SPONSOR: Emery (Jones, 117)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Special Committee on Utilities by a vote of 9 to 0.

This substitute requires persons, corporations, public utilities, and municipalities that own gas plants to comply with any order of the Missouri Public Service Commission that relates to federal natural gas safety standards. Noncompliance with a commission's order is punishable by a maximum fine of \$10,000 for each violation or a maximum fine of \$100,000 for a single continuing violation. The commission has discretion to lower the maximum fines based on factors specified in the substitute.

FISCAL NOTE: No impact on General Revenue Fund in FY 2008, FY 2009, and FY 2010. Estimated Income on Other State Funds of \$0 to Unknown in FY 2008, FY 2009, and FY 2010.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that the bill will prevent gas explosions and other safety hazards by increasing penalties that have remained unchanged since 1918. The bill is necessary and long overdue.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Jones (117); and Jeff Davis, Missouri Public Service Commission.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say that it will bring Missouri into compliance with federal standards. There is no gas safety issue addressed in the bill, and safety is always the primary concern of the gas industry.

Testifying on the bill were Laclede Gas Company; and Missouri Energy Development Association.