

HCS HB 811 -- TREE MAINTENANCE BY UTILITIES

SPONSOR: Hobbs (Schad)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Committee on Conservation and Natural Resources by a vote of 11 to 0.

This substitute allows public utilities, municipal utilities, and other electrical service providers to trim, remove, and control trees that threaten the safe and reliable operation of electrical service. Permissible distances from power lines for removing trees are specified based on the charge of the power line. Any tree may be removed with the consent of the owner, and any tree that actually threatens the power supply may be removed after a one-week notice to the owner even if it falls outside the recommended distance guidelines.

FISCAL NOTE: No impact on state funds in FY 2008, FY 2009, and FY 2010.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that in order to secure the safe and reliable operation of utility services, it is imperative that utility companies be permitted to safely trim vegetation away from power lines. The bill clarifies current law and gives clear guidelines and presumptions that are currently contained in property easements but are not well known.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Schad; Mike Torres, Platte-Clay Electric Cooperative; Don Shaw, Central Electric Power Cooperative; and Missouri Energy Development Association.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say that one contributing factor to power outages is the neglect of lines by utility companies.

Testifying on the bill was Consumers Council of Missouri.