

CONSERVATION LOBBY DAY 2010

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Clean Water Permit Fees

The issue/problem

After a decade with no increases in water pollution discharge permit fees and drastic cuts in General Revenue, Missouri Department of Natural Resources' Water Protection Program will become insolvent by October unless additional revenues are provided. If that occurs, the program—and more than 12,000 permits—could be returned to federal officials in D.C. and Kansas City for monitoring and enforcement.

Cuts to program funding have already resulted in a loss of jobs, permit backlogs, and increased risk to public health due to poor water quality monitoring. In 2005, the General Assembly began looking at this issue. The Joint Legislative Committee Report, issued in December 2008, recommended an increase in fees to cover deficits, plus \$3.5 million more per year from General Revenue, with increases for inflation as it occurs.

Hard Times

In this economy, General Revenue cannot be increased, which leaves a permit fee increase as the only option to alleviate some of the budget deficit. The water program needs \$8 million to be functional and effective.

The Solution

Stakeholders, including industry, agriculture, municipalities and the environmental community, all agree that they would prefer to have a water pollution discharge program run by Missouri, not by Washington, D.C. Raising permit fees is good for Missouri, is the only immediate option, and is overdue. With a solid funding base, backlogs for operating and construction permits would be eliminated and better permits would be written, which would better serve permittees and the people of Missouri. Furthermore, improvements in water quality monitoring and enforcement will protect the health of our streams and lakes. Raising permit fees sufficiently and fairly will mean cleaner, safer water and:

-  **No tax hikes**
-  **Keeping Missouri jobs & expertise**
-  **Fiscal responsibility**
-  **Maintaining the State's protections for water and public health**



**Support fair and equitable pollution permit fee increases
for Missouri clean water programs in THIS session.**