The Mayer Report

Protecting Consumers From Rate Increases

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Protecting Consumers From Rate Increases

By ROB MAYER

Last week, I joined another senator in introducing legislation that would better protect consumers from an energy consortium's efforts to pass costs onto ratepayers in relation to efforts to obtain a site permit to build a second nuclear power plant in Callaway County.

The measure, Senate Bill 406, details a three-pronged approach to protect consumers including a hard cap of $40 million on the amount of money a utility could recover, a rebate plan for consumers in the case that the plant is either never built or fails to generate electricity, and a steady course of funding for the Office of Public Counsel in the Missouri Public Service Commission. The commission is the regulatory arm that oversees Missouri utilities. The Office of Public Counsel represents consumers in cases before the Public Service Commission.

This is one of several proposals before the legislature supportive of making sure that Missouri has abundant and clean energy supplies for our future. But this bill stands apart from the others because it offers the greatest consumer protections I've seen to date.

The bill is endorsed by two consumer and business advocacy groups. The first is the Fair Energy Rate Action Fund (FERAF) and includes the AARP, Missouri Association of Social Welfare, and Consumers Council of Missouri, to name a few. The second group is the Missouri Industrial Energy Consumers (MIEC) that is comprised of more than a dozen large Missouri industrial companies.

The bill, along with others of the same topic, will be heard before the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Emerging Issues, Pensions and Urban Affairs this Wednesday, March 9, beginning at 4 p.m. in Senate Committee Room 2. The hearing is expected to last several hours to ensure all those who wish to testify in support or opposition of this proposal have the opportunity to do so.

I am also pleased to announce that several law enforcement agencies in the 25th Senatorial District received grants to help obtain essential law enforcement equipment necessary to increase public and officer safety. Securing the safety of our local, county and state officers and the general public they serve is always a top priority. I'm proud three counties and nine cities in my district will receive the funding needed to help provide adequate safety measures.

The Missouri Department of Public Safety distributes grants provided by the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance to purchase the much-needed equipment, including bulletproof vests, in-car cameras, and police radios. Cities and counties in the 25th District listed below received more than $85,000 in grant funding, which is limited to $10,000 for each award with a 10 percent local match requirement. They include Bernie, Dexter, Doniphan, Dunklin County, Essex, Greenville, Hayti, Kennett, Malden, New Madrid County, Pemiscot County, Puxico and Three Rivers College.

Local Law Enforcement Block Grants are used to provide funds to city police, county sheriffs, public university police departments, and state law enforcement agencies to underwrite projects that reduce crime and improve public safety. Moreover, this block grant program emphasizes local decision-making and encourages communities to craft their own responses to problems dealing with crime.
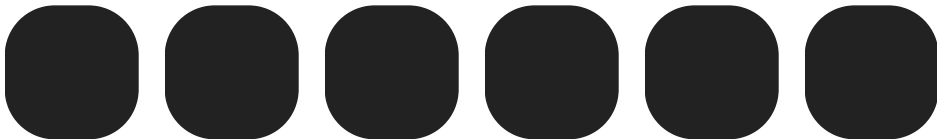
I know the law enforcement agencies in the 25th District will use funds provided by the grants to benefit our communities as a whole.

Please feel free to contact me throughout the year with any comments, questions, or issues using the information listed below and on my website at **www.senate.mo.gov/mayer.**

Rob Mayer, R-Dexter, represents the 25th State Senatorial District in the Missouri State Senate and serves the state as the President Pro Tem of the State Senate.

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