

Ehlmann Has Not Taken A Position On Proposed Arch Tax

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St. Charles County, Missouri - Contrary to a published report, St. Charles County Executive Steve Ehlmann has not taken a position on the proposed tax increase for Great Rivers Greenway.

In the report, it was said that Ehlmann would not veto an ordinance passed by the County Council putting the proposition known as the "Safe and Accessible Arch and Public Parks Initiative" on the April ballot.

Ehlmann says he has not made a decision on the measure, which would add up to three-sixteenths of one cent in sales taxes.

Ehlmann said he has not promised anyone he will not veto such a bill nor has he promised anyone he would sign it.

While he has been discussing the issue with regional leaders for the last year, he is unaware of any formal request for a bill to himself or any member of the County Council. He has scheduled further meetings on the issue next week, and anticipates a bill will be offered for debate.

Ehlmann's main criticism of the bill last year came after an amendment was passed by the Missouri House of Representatives allowing St. Charles County, St. Louis County and St. Louis City to place the issue on the ballot without a hearing and little debate on the floor.

When the bill was heard in the Missouri Senate, Ehlmann testified on the bill, but neither for or against.

While conceding that the Arch project would benefit the region, he asked the Senators to clarify that local funds would not be used to alleviate the federal government of its responsibilities regarding this national park. He also asked that the additional revenue that would be raised, if the measure was approved by the voters, would not be diverted to developers for Tax Increment Finance projects.

Ehlmann has continued to raise concerns with supporters of the Arch measure, and has pledged to keep an open mind on the issue until it has had a hearing before the County Council.

"The last thing we want to do is judge this proposal before we have heard from the public, as was done in the Missouri House," Ehlmann said.

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