Forsee’s letter surprised faculty

Cap-and-trade view not shared by some.

By Janese Heavin

Tuesday, December 1, 2009

University of Missouri System President Gary Forsee did not consult with MU faculty before publicly opposing federal cap-and-trade legislation, and some say his views don’t reflect their own.

Gary Forsee

PREVIOUS ARTICLE

Cap-and-trade bad for MU, Forsee says [Nov. 24, 2009]

Faculty members were taken by surprise when they read in the Tribune that Forsee sent a letter opposing the bill, said Dan Hooley, a professor of classical studies and chairman of MU’s Environmental Affairs and Sustainability Committee.

“He seems to be speaking unilaterally but did not consult with faculty members or the community and with no explanation of his process of thinking,” Hooley said. “It seems to me he does have every right to speak for himself, but he simply can’t speak for the community. That’s not how this campus operates.”
Forsee sent the letter to the entire Missouri congressional delegation asking them to vote against legislation aimed to reduce greenhouse emissions. "As currently written, we have grave concerns and oppose this legislation for the detrimental impact it will have on the" UM System, he wrote.

But "we" doesn’t include the entire university, Hooley said, estimating that many on the Columbia campus support the legislation. "MU does not oppose cap-and-trade," he said.

Chancellor Brady Deaton also was not aware of Forsee’s letter, spokeswoman Mary Jo Banken said. Deaton thinks the energy policy "requires ongoing discussion and thorough scrutiny," she said. "We have been in discussions with our students about MU’s use of energy and the implications of our energy consumption. We take this important national issue very seriously and will continue our work to reduce energy consumption and develop solutions to the energy crisis."

Forsee did not discuss his position with the Board of Curators before sending the letter, either, Chairman Bo Fraser said, although he suspects most members would agree with the position.

"Our job is to look out for the university as best we can in this time of extra-tight money," Fraser, of Columbia, said. The legislation "brings some pretty big numbers crashing down on the university. Where we would get the money to meet those requirements, I’m not sure."

Forsee estimated in the letter that MU would have to spend between $5 million and $8 million on credits annually during implementation. Those figures are based on Environmental Protection Agency and Energy Information Administration estimates, but administrators did not further clarify how those calculations were made.

Forsee’s focus on the costs shows he’s acting in the best interest of students, MU College Republicans said.

"It’s always going to be good for students when the president of the system is looking out for our wallets," said member Eric Hobbs, a senior.

Forsee’s stance also has the support of atmospheric science professor Tony Lupo, who dubbed the letter a "brave undertaking." Until the debate over how much people contribute to climate change is settled, he said, legislation is premature.

Forsee, along with Deaton, signed the American College & University Presidents’ Climate Commitment, saying they are “deeply concerned about the unprecedented scale and speed of global warming.” Brian Roach, president of the Mizzou Democrats, said Forsee is going back on that pledge, which called for reducing gases by 80 percent by 2050. "It makes me wonder whether his signature on that document was simply a hollow statement that he wasn’t going to follow up on," said Roach, a senior.

Forsee will continue to advocate for the actions outlined in the climate letter, spokeswoman Jennifer Hollingshead said, but "we also have a fiscal responsibility to ensure that the total mission of the university can be protected and enhanced in what will continue to be fiscally challenging times."
Curator Wayne Goode, a former Democratic state senator, said the extra costs associated with cap-and-trade would be worth it if the legislation actually reduced emissions. He's not sure the current bill does that.

"Clearly, cap-and-trade is going to cost energy users more money in the short run, which I would say is not necessarily a bad thing, as long as it is effective in dealing with the problem," he said. "But if the money spent is not getting the job done, then that is not in the best public interest. It gets down to how the bill is written, and that's a big issue. I see global warming as a major environmental problem that's going to be facing the world for a long time. We've got to solve it, but we've got to do it right."

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University of Missouri System President Gary Forsee has ties to companies that oppose cap-and-trade legislation but also to those that stand to benefit if it passes.

His recent letter urging federal lawmakers to oppose the bill “represents his position solely as president of the University of Missouri System,” spokeswoman Jennifer Hollingshead said. “While he continues to support green and conservation initiatives that are in everyone’s best interest, he remains concerned — as outlined in the letter — that the University of Missouri will be subject to the financial ramifications of the legislation should it become law.”

Forsee serves on the board of Great Plains Energy, the holding company of Kansas City Power & Light, which opposes the bill that would limit greenhouse gas emissions. That’s not a conflict of interest, Hollingshead said, because board members do not lobby on legislative matters.

Forsee also serves on the board of Ingersoll Rand, a commercial products manufacturer that, according to its Web site, supports cap-and-trade legislation.

Forsee’s brother, David, is the founder of Brookside Capital, a consulting company that invests in renewable and other advanced energy technologies. Gary Forsee has no investment in that company, which David Forsee said would likely stand to benefit if a cap-and-trade bill were approved.

“At some level it would help my business to provide an economic incentive for something I believe needs to fundamentally happen anyway,” David Forsee said.

He stopped short of endorsing the cap-and-trade legislation but said it’s “shortsighted to wring your hands and try to protect the horse and buggy. It’s going to happen, and it’s going to happen globally.”
That said, David Forsee said he understands why his brother would be against it. Gary Forsee estimated the bill would cost MU between $5 million and $8 million during implementation.

"It's not shortsighted for him to take that view because this is going to cause some real problems" financially for the university and other entities, David Forsee said. "I don't know what to do about the university and others impacted by this. ... But in the long term, we need to be in the middle of the advanced energy game."

Gary Forsee's investment portfolio includes companies that stand to gain from cap-and-trade. He owns more than $10,000 worth of General Electric stock and another $10,000 in GE bonds, according to his personal financial disclosure statement. GE has lobbied for the bill and stands to financially benefit if cap-and-trade were to pass. Forsee also owns more than $10,000 worth of stock in Wal-Mart, Johnson & Johnson, Exxon Mobil, Ford and some 40 other companies.

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MU touts energy measures

By Janese Heavin

Posted December 1, 2009 at 3:51 p.m.

Even without federal mandates to do so, MU has taken a leadership role in reducing energy use on campus, a November report from campus facilities says.

According to the department:

*Educational and general space on campus has grown by 30 percent since 1990, while energy use during that time has been reduced by 10 percent and greenhouse gas emissions reduced by 12 percent on a square foot basis.

*Energy conservation measures have helped MU avoid some $4.6 million in annual utility costs. Reducing the need to generate additional energy has lowered long-term investment costs in new production equipment, avoiding potentially another $2 million. Campus facilities estimates the total cost avoidance of $6.6 million a year is equivalent to five degree programs or $241 per student.

*Based on EPA data, the corresponding reduction of CO2 emissions is equivalent to the removal of 19,000 cars from roadways or the planting of 30,000 acres of trees.

Here's a breakdown of MU efficiency efforts outlined in the summary report:

* In 1990 most lighting on campus was either incandescent or low efficiency fluorescent with magnetic ballasts. Today more than 99 percent of the exterior lighting and more than 90 percent of the interior lighting on campus has been converted to high efficiency lighting. Incandescent exit signs have been replaced with LED, reducing energy consumption by 80 to 98 percent. Daylight harvesting has also been used to automatically turn off interior lights in areas that receive sunlight.
• Motion sensors have been installed in thousands of classrooms, offices, conference rooms, and laboratories to turn off lights and set-back thermostats when spaces are unoccupied.

• Major HVAC systems have been retrofitted to higher efficiency systems. These upgrades consisted of upgrading the controls, motors, regulation of air flow, use of energy recovery devices, and use of occupancy sensors/schedules to reduce building energy consumption.

• Energy efficiency design standards for HVAC systems are implemented on all campus projects to meet or exceed federal and state guidelines. All new buildings and renovations are designed to meet American Society of Heating, Refrigeration, and Air Conditioning Engineers to establish minimum energy efficient design requirements.

• Energy Management Control System is an automated digital control system for HVAC systems, which monitors, controls, and reports energy use while maintaining comfort in campus buildings. Over the past 19 years the EMCS system has been expanded from fewer than 10 buildings to over 120 buildings comprising approximately 80 percent of the campus.

• All buildings are fully metered for energy consumption. Metering data is analyzed and energy consumption patterns are identified. Buildings showing a potential energy saving opportunities are audited and energy conservation projects are implemented.

• Window film has been installed on several buildings to reduce radiant heating during the summer months.

• Since 1990, water use has decreased by 49 percent. This is a result of implementing projects to eliminate waste water cooling, using sensors in lavatories on sinks and fixtures, and other water conservation efforts. On a total gallon/gsf basis, MU has reduced water use 61 percent.

• In 1990 each air conditioned building had its own system. Today after installing over 19 miles of underground chilled water loop piping and connecting most of the major campus buildings to the loop, the number of chillers required has been reduced by 57 percent.

• MU installed free cooling heat exchangers to take advantage of cold outside air to produce chilled water to cool specialized research equipment that needs cooling during winter months. Prior to installing this free cooling system, electric chillers were run year-round to provide for this need.

Campus Facilities also plans to implement other conservation measures as part of the ongoing energy conservation program, including more upgrades and use of alternative fuels.
UM System President Gary Forsee is free to speak on behalf of the system without going through the Board of Curators first, the board's chair said.

I had asked Curator Bo Fraser if Forsee's letter to federal lawmakers opposing cap-and-trade legislation was done appropriately. Forsee sent the letter on behalf of the university system without going through curators first and without notifying MU Chancellor Brady Deaton or faculty members.

"He's free to speak for the university on lots of issues," Fraser said. "If he had to come to the board anytime something should be said about things important to the university, that ties his hands way too much in my opinion. I guess if curators disagreed, we could always take exception and go on record that way, but I doubt that will happen. I don't think we ought to be tying his hands to speak what he thinks is important to the university."

It's unclear if Forsee expected the letter to be made public; it was sent to media outlets through U.S. Rep. Blaine Luetkemeyer's office.
CLEVELAND TRIBUNE

CAMPUS CHATTER
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Limbaugh roots for Forsee, MU

By Janese Heavin

Posted November 26, 2009 at 7:53 a.m.

UM System President Gary Forsee confused climate change groups by sending a letter to federal lawmakers opposing cap-and-trade. After all, as many have pointed out, he previously signed the American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment, a letter that expressed concern about global warming and pledged to reduce emissions.

Forsee made some fans, though, including Rush Limbaugh. Limbaugh yesterday told radio audiences he would be rooting for Mizzou Saturday because of Forsee's position.

From the transcript:

"This is a gutsy move for Gary Forsee to make, because colleges all over the country basically beg for money. They beg for money. Even if they've got a successful football program they're out there begging for money, and who do you beg for money from? Members of Congress. Yet Forsee is putting his university and the state (and even the country) ahead of what might otherwise be a personal pursuit to go out and make a deal to get some money here. This is a really gutsy and courageous move. Now, I don't want to say too much about it more than I already have, 'cause I like Gary Forsee and I don't want to harm his reputation by having it be said that I know him and went to school with him and really like what he's doing here. I guess I just did."

Read the rest here.
One dead in crash on Interstate 70

By Brennan David

Published December 1, 2009 at 3 p.m.
Updated December 1, 2009 at 8:48 p.m.

A Columbia man died around 1:45 p.m. Tuesday when a small sport-utility vehicle veered off Interstate 70 westbound west of Lake of the Woods and burst into flames.

Fire and rescue crews responded to the accident near mile marker 129.6 to find the 2003 Toyota engulfed in flames, said Capt. Eric Hartman of the Columbia Fire Department. It took firefighters about 10 minutes to extinguish the flames. One body was found in the vehicle.

Police later identified the victim as Henry Liu, 73, of Columbia.

Liu, of 3212 Woodbine Drive, retired from the University of Missouri School of Engineering almost a decade ago, and in 2000 he founded the Freight Pipeline Co. on Maguire Boulevard, according to Tribune archives. Liu was an internationally acclaimed expert in pipeline engineering and helped MU land a prestigious National Science Foundation grant.

He recently won a $100,000 award called the Purpose Prize as a result of his inventions, which include a process to use the waste from coal-fired power plants to manufacture environmentally safe bricks. The Purpose Prize is given to older people in their "encore careers," and Liu was one of five winners selected.

At the scene of the accident Tuesday afternoon, a stretch of tire marks could be seen for nearly 50 yards off the right side of the roadway in the grass that leads up to the tree line the vehicle struck. Nearly half of the front end of the vehicle was pushed into the driver's side of the cab.

A top portion of a pine tree that snapped upon the vehicle's impact rested on the ground. A section of trees and grass was completely burned in a diameter of about 50 feet.

There were no other injuries related to the accident.
MU incubator finds partner in U.K.

By Justin Willett

Tuesday, December 1, 2009

The University of Missouri Life Science Business Incubator at Monsanto Place has forged a partnership with a similar facility in the United Kingdom with the hope that European companies looking to enter the U.S. market will choose to locate at the Columbia incubator.

The MU incubator and BioCity Nottingham, a bioscience and health care business incubator, signed a memorandum of agreement dated Nov. 1 outlining nine ways that the two organizations will share information and resources.

Jake Halliday, president and CEO of the MU incubator, said the agreement is the consummation of a relationship that began with PetScreen Ltd., a UK veterinary diagnostics company based at BioCity. PetScreen went to the Columbia incubator to perform canine cancer research with Carolyn Henry of the MU College of Veterinary Medicine and later selected the MU incubator as its U.S. headquarters.

“I think as” PetScreen “worked with us and saw some of the support they got here, I think they spoke about that to other companies and to the CEO there in Nottingham,” Halliday said. “He contacted us to explore interest. We bounced the concept around for most of a year before formalizing it.”

A delegation from Regional Economic Development Inc. led by Columbia Mayor Darwin Hindman visited Nottingham in July and discovered the cities and incubators shared strategies and goals. Bob Black of SIRCAL Contracting Inc. was REDI chairman at the time.

“We saw what an outstanding facility it was,” Black said of the trip. “We kept talking to them and finding other companies that were interested in U.S. business. It just looked like it was going to be a good fit.”

Black said several UK companies referred by BioCity are working with the MU incubator and the Trulaske College of Business to assess the value of the U.S. market to them.

Halliday said he hopes many more firms such as PetScreen will come to Columbia.

To make that happen, Halliday said, the agreement signed with BioCity CEO Glenn Crocker includes the offer of free workspace for as long as a week for visiting companies, promoting the partnership at international trade shows and within each other’s facilities, and information on the “how-tos” of entering and launching a product in the European Union or the United States.
“This collaboration supports our strategy of building a high-technology industry cluster in our area in two main ways,” Halliday said in a news release. “First of all, it gives us a fertile source of young European companies that will value research collaboration with MU and potentially locate at our business incubator in Columbia; secondly, it helps our U.S. startup companies penetrate attractive but complex markets in Europe.”

BioCity Nottingham has similar agreements with the Commercialization Centre for Innovative Technologies in New Jersey and the Virginia BioTechnology Research Park in Richmond, Va.

Black said he has been to Nottingham twice and is planning to lead another trip in the spring that would include Rob Duncan, vice chancellor for research, and Neil Olson, dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine. He said that trip would concentrate on opportunities in comparative medicine.

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Aspirin compromises effectiveness of vaccines

Researchers at University of Missouri have found that some over-the-counter drugs, such as aspirin and Tylenol that inhibit certain enzymes, could impact the effectiveness of vaccines.

Led by Charles Brown, associate professor of veterinary pathobiology in the MU College of Veterinary Medicine, the study shed light on how the effectiveness of flu vaccines is compromised by some drugs.

"If you are taking aspirin regularly, which many people do for cardiovascular treatment, or acetaminophen (Tylenol) for pain and fever and get a flu shot, there is a good chance that you won't have a good antibody response," said Brown.

He added: "These drugs block the enzyme COX-1, which works in tissues throughout the body. We have found that if you block COX-1, you might be decreasing the amount of antibodies your body is producing, and you need high amounts of antibodies to be protected."

COX enzymes play important roles in the regulation of the immune system. The role of these enzymes is not yet understood completely, and medications that inhibit them may have adverse side effects.

Recent research has discovered that drugs that inhibit COX enzymes, such as COX-2, have an impact on the effectiveness of vaccines. Brown's research indicates that inhibiting COX-1, which is present in tissues throughout the body, such as the brain or kidneys, could also impact vaccines' effectiveness.

The researchers are also studying the regulation of inflammation and how that leads to the development or prevention of disease.

Many diseases, such as arthritis, cardiovascular disease and diabetes, are all chronic inflammatory diseases. Contrary to previous beliefs, inflammation is generally a good thing that helps protect individuals from infection.

Many of the non-steroidal drugs that treat inflammatory conditions reduce antibody responses, which are necessary for treating infections. "So far, we've tested this on an animal model and have found that these non-steroidal drugs do inhibit vaccines, but the next step is to test it on humans. If our results show that COX-1 inhibitors affect vaccines, the takeaway might be to not take drugs, such as aspirin, Tylenol and ibuprofen, for a couple weeks before and after you get a vaccine," said Brown.
MU in the news

By Janese Heavin

Posted November 24, 2009 at 12:46 p.m.

MU faculty and students have been in national news more than usual lately. Two especially noteworthy stories, in case you missed them:

*Self Magazine writes about Katie Quinn, a recent MU graduate who saved a woman's life through a bone marrow transplant. According to the story, Quinn had hoped to give blood during a Greek Week blood drive on campus but her iron was too low to qualify. So instead, she signed up to give a DNA sample and put her name on a bone marrow registry. Long -- and very good -- story short, Quinn's bone marrow ultimately saved the life of Anna Robinson. Read the story here -- and if you do, you might want to grab a tissue.

*MU communication experts who studied Twilight audiences have gotten a lot of national attention. Both CNN and USA Today noted their new book "Bitten by Twilight: Youth culture, media and the vampire franchise." The researchers essentially found that teens responded favorably to the fact the main character, Edward, desires a woman for non-sexual reasons. The researchers interviewed Twilight readers who participated on fan Web sites or attended Twilight conventions.
Schaefer wins No. 2 role on appropriations panel

By Terry Ganey

Tuesday, December 1, 2009

JEFFERSON CITY — State Sen. Kurt Schaefer of Columbia has moved up in the Senate's pecking order.

On Tuesday afternoon, Senate President Pro Tem Charlie Shields, R-St. Joseph, appointed Schaefer, a Republican, as vice chairman of the powerful Senate Appropriations Committee. With the appointment, Schaefer will be the No. 2 man on the committee, which plays a major role in how the state's budget is crafted.

Schaefer has been a member of the committee since he was elected. He moved up to succeed Sen. Rob Mayer, R-Dexter, who was named committee chairman last month. Mayer succeeded Sen. Gary Nodler, R-Joplin, who resigned as chairman as he is running for a GOP congressional nomination in southwest Missouri.

Shields said there is a tradition that senators from the 19th District, which includes Columbia and Boone County, have been leaders in the budget process “and I am continuing that tradition by entrusting Kurt with the duties of vice chair.”

In addition to presiding over the committee in Mayer's absence, the vice chair is usually one of the five senators who would serve on budget conference committees with House members when the final budget is hammered out.

**Schaefer's new position should help protect the funding prospects for the University of Missouri.**

Schaefer, who was elected in 2008, is serving his first term in the Senate. He has predicted a difficult budget process next year because of the sharp drop in state revenues.

Schaefer said he appreciated Shields' faith in his abilities and looked forward to working with Mayer “to continue to pay for the critical functions of government during this budget crisis without causing long-term negative effects to the quality of life and services Missourians have come to expect.”

Shields also appointed on Tuesday state Sen. Jim Lembke, R-St. Louis, to a vacancy on the appropriations committee.

Initial hearings on the state budget are scheduled for next week.
 Reach Terry Ganey at 573-815-1708 or e-mail tganey@columbiatribune.com.
Sen. Schaefer appointed vice chairman of Missouri Senate Appropriations Committee

By Stephanie Fleming
December 2, 2009 | 12:01 a.m. CST

JEFFERSON CITY — Columbia’s state senator was appointed Tuesday as second-in-command of the Senate Appropriations Committee, which controls the budget.

Senate President Pro Tem Charlie Shields, R-St. Joseph, announced Tuesday that Sen. Kurt Schaefer, R-Columbia, would fill the post of the committee’s vice chairman.

The committee funds MU, the single biggest employer in Schaefer’s district.

"Sen. Schaefer has a good record of being supportive of higher education in our state, putting him as vice chair of appropriations sends a strong message that I value higher education and what we’re trying to do to move this state forward," Shields said. The "That's a real positive for not only the University of Missouri, but for all of higher education."

"I appreciate Sen. Shields' faith in my abilities to serve as vice chair," Schaefer said in a news release. "I also look forward to working side-by-side with (Appropriations Chairman) Sen. Mayer as we work to continue to pay for the critical functions of government during this budget crisis without causing long-term negative effects to the quality of life and services Missourians have come to expect."

Sen. Rob Mayer, R-Dexter, was appointed last month as chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee after Sen. Gary Nodler, R-Joplin, stepped down, saying he wanted to avoid any appearance of a conflict of interest with his campaign for Congress. Nodler said he also looks forward to working with Schaefer.
"I was pleased when I heard he'd been appointed," Mayer said. "I think he has shown knowledge and ability to tackle difficult situations. I'm confident in his ability to do the job."

Another member of the committee — Sen. Frank Barnitz, D-Lake Spring, — said it'll be important in the upcoming legislative session to have strong leadership that recognizes the difficulties the budget crisis will bring.

"I hope he will do well," Barnitz said. "I think he could."

Barnitz also said Schaefer's short tenure so far — only one legislative term — could be good or bad.

"He hasn't had the experience. That can be good. He won't have as many preconceived notions of where cuts need to be made," Barnitz said.

Sen. Jim Lembke, R-Mehlville, was also appointed to the committee. Shields said his appointment was based on his experience in the budgetary process when he served in the Missouri House of Representatives.

"Unlike the federal government, we can't print money or borrow from China — we have a constitutional mandate to not spend more than we have, and I am committed to continuing the tradition of passing a balanced budget," Lembke said in a press release.

The budget process will begin on Dec. 7 with hearings by the Senate Appropriations Committee.