

state senator, and the Unicameral, the state legislature, has no business interfering with rates relative to natural gas. I was told, personally, to keep my nose out of it. I submit to each and every one of us in here, I think we should get our noses in. It is rather interesting, within the last two years, Douglas, Washington and Sarpy County have experienced an increase of 48% in the cost of natural gas. Within the past few weeks, gas consumers have been asked to bear an additional 22% increase and, of course, just like clockwork, Northern Natural Gas is again in the process of filing for another increase in April of 1978. It was rather interesting at a recent public hearing of the Public Works Committee, a top Northern official told the committee that the surge in rates has not passed. Also interesting is just last week that the Metropolitan Utilities District's board has approved a 1978 budget of some 18%, again additional cost being passed on to the consumer. I would like to see the State Legislature pass this resolution this morning for the mere purpose of being able to present this resolution to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission at their public hearing February 28 in Washington. I don't know if ever Nebraska has spoken loud enough to let the people in Washington know that we care about the consumer here in the State of Nebraska. I think all too often we depend solely on MUD or whomever. For example, in Douglas County, it is MUD who is supposedly suppose to be protecting the consumer and they supposedly are suppose to be in Washington intervening for the consumer. Yes, I did read the intervention, the petition that was filed by MUD, and believe me, ladies and gentlemen, it certainly doesn't hold very much water as far as I am concerned and I am sure the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission feels the same way. I don't know why MUD has not protested loud enough, apparently they haven't protested loud enough in Washington. I will be happy to supply each member of this body with that petition that has been filed by MUD. In addition, I would hope that if this resolution does pass, we will join with eight other states and I think that this will have a substantial impact as to what kind of an increase Northern Natural will get as for 1977. Presently, I, as a state senator, and I, as a consumer of natural gas, am in the process of personally filing a petition for intervention before the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission in Washington on February 28th of next month and I know that I will be meeting with officials from eight other states and hopefully the cost that Northern Natural has asked for of some 109 million dollars will be substantially decreased as a result of our intervention and I will present this resolution, if passed this morning, to each member of the Regulatory Commission, the Energy Commission, in Washington attesting the adoption of this resolution and the concern that this Unicameral has for the consumers of natural gas in the State of Nebraska.

PRESIDENT: Do you have an amendment, Mr. Clerk? Excuse me, Senator Venditte, have you completed your remarks?

SENATOR VENDITTE: Yes, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT: Thank you. We probably will be back further.

CLERK: Mr. President, Senator Maxey moves to amend LR 151 to include Lancaster after Washington County. That is offered by Senator Maxey.

PRESIDENT: Senator Maxey.