

Now this may well be a top priority project and it may well be a very worthwhile project, and if it is, I think it should be presented to the Appropriations Committee by the Game and Parks Commission. I feel that is the proper way it should be done and so I am not going to support this bill or any bills like it that continue to not go through the normal appropriations process.

SENATOR SAVAGE: The Chair recognizes Senator Lamb.

SENATOR LAMB: Mr. President and members of the Legislature, I would like to ask Senator Mills a question, please.

SENATOR SAVAGE: Will you respond, Senator Mills?

SENATOR MILLS: Yes, sir.

SENATOR LAMB: I am wondering if this money could not come from the habitat fund. As I understand it, and I have a letter from Senator Mahoney, that there is well over \$700,000 in the fund which is scheduled to be used for acquiring land, buying land, and I have had complaints from people up in my district along the Niobrara River. In fact, one tract of land up there of 700 acres is being purchased by the Game Commission. They had a public hearing up there. The local people all opposed the purchase. The county commissioners, I have a letter from the county commissioners opposing the purchase, from the Natural Resource District and from some individuals, yet the Game Commission is going ahead with the purchase of this land. I am wondering if the funds from that habitat stamp program could not be better utilized perhaps in modernizing the fish hatchery rather than buying this land in areas where the people are opposing it?

SENATOR MILLS: Senator Lamb, first of all, you are discussing an issue that I know you are very concerned about, the willing seller, willing buyer issue in northeastern Nebraska on the Niobrara. That money you are speaking about, Senator Lamb, that was dedicated in Senator Dworak's bill, the habitat stamp, says and it speaks to specific things. It speaks to leasing. It speaks to habitat improvement. No, Senator Lamb, I don't think they can use the money from the habitat revenues to renovate a fish hatchery which is used for the production of trout to distribute all across the State of Nebraska. No, I say to you, Senator Lamb, the bill that Senator Dworak passed that created the habitat stamp says explicitly what that money must go for and there is a review of the Appropriations Committee prior to that expenditure.

SENATOR LAMB: Thank you, Senator Mills. I have a letter here from Mr. Mahoney and he states that \$776,000 annually was allocated to this phase of the habitat program, that is, acquisition of land. I submit that this is an excessive amount of money for the Game Commission to be using to purchase land and that rental of the land would be much more acceptable to the people in the area. Thank you.

SENATOR SAVAGE: There are no further lights on. Senator Mills, do you wish to close? Senator Dworak. You may close, Senator Mills.