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FLOOR DEBATE

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amendment filed which I asked leave or did withdraw, would have opened up the Universal Service Fund for some possible one-time seed money for this particular fund. In reviewing that and discussing the precedent or possible precedent that that could establish and receiving representations that people who pay into the Universal Service Fund and who have truly an interest in it, would prefer to have the opportunity to help provide seed money to jump-start this fund. We are suggesting that this is a more appropriate way to fund this Enhancement Fund and get it started. I don't...I really don't see a downside. I know questions are going to come up about whether this is a totally inadequate sum of money. Certainly it's inadequate...an inadequate sum of money to meet the advanced telecommunication needs around Nebraska. There is no question about that, but I think it is a methodology and it is a way of getting started with providing some helpful seed money. The local community, city or county will have an opportunity to match those funds and use economic development dollars that they're authorized in the General File version of this bill, to use for promoting telecommunications in their local community. So I think for smaller communities, it will be another tool, if you will, that they could use and take advantage of. So I'm sure that there will be some questions and discussion, and I look forward to that. I would ask the body to carefully consider this and, hopefully, that we will be able to adopt it. Thank you.

**PRESIDENT MAURSTAD:** Thank you, Senator Bromm. Senator Beutler, on AM1205.

**SENATOR BEUTLER:** Mr. Lieutenant Governor and members of the Legislature, I have a number of questions of Senator Bromm with regard to what we're doing here. And although I perhaps can be talked into this, let me say that my initial starting point is simply this, that we have a bill here that deals with the leasing and sale of fiber, dark fiber, and which maybe also has to do with prohibiting public utilities from participating in the telecommunications business, as that is described as lighted fiber, and as an adjunct to the leasing provisions, this Enhancement Fund is created almost as a receptacle for whatever haphazard amounts might be put in there haphazardly by this or that public utility company who might, under the terms of the