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FLOOR DEBATE

February 18, 2003 LB 52

Senators Don Pederson and Hartnett. (Read title.) The bill was read for the first time on January 9 of this year, referred to the Urban Affairs Committee. That committee reports the bill to General File with no committee amendments.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Senator Don Pederson, you're recognized to open on the advancement of LB 52.

SENATOR D. PEDERSON: Good morning, Mr. President, members of the Legislature. LB 52 simply increases the dollar limitations for municipal combined public works projects. Current law authorizes cities of the first and second class, and villages, to aggregate individual street, water, or sewer improvements, to form a combined project for the purpose of bidding and awarding a contract for a single combined project. Individual combine...improvements are limited to not more than \$15,000, and the aggregate cost of all combined improvement is limited to \$50,000. LB 52 would increase the dollar amount to \$50,000 for the aggregate cost of any individual improvement, and \$200,000 for the aggregate cost of all combined improvement projects. The dollar amounts have not been changed for authority since 1961. I introduced LB 52 on behalf of the League of Municipalities, who has worked steadily over the past several years with a number of officials from various cities across the state, including the city of North Platte, in addressing the problems they face in obtaining competitive bids for these improvements. I believe the unambiguous language contained in LB 52 will provide them with an avenue and the ability to better utilize the improvement dollars for public improvements. LB 52 was advanced as LB 648 last year, and was advanced from the committee, but due to time constraints, we did not have the opportunity to debate this on the floor of the Legislature. Just for point of information, from the League of Municipalities I have found that when the bill was passed in 1961, \$15,000 has now got the purchasing power of \$86,000 in 2000. So during that 40-year time lag, the cost of inflation has overwhelmed, and 50 thousand dollars for the same purchasing power that would, in the year 2000, be able to buy 287, almost 288 thousand dollars. So the point is that cities now would have the opportunity to use a more reasonable figure to gain more competitive bids than under the current law. So I would urge you to advance this