

**Executive Board February 11, 2019**

**HILGERS:** Going to get started. Good to see you. Welcome to the hearing of the Executive Board, a public hearing. My name is Mike Hilgers. I represent District 21, northwest Lincoln/Lancaster County. I'm the Chair of this committee. We will start with introductions. To my right is our legal counsel, Janice Satra. To my far right is Paige Edwards, the committee clerk. Our page today is Kelsey Loseke from Blair. And we'll start with member introductions starting to my far right, Senator Lowe.

**LOWE:** State Senator John Lowe, District 37, Kearney, Gibbon, and Shelton and surrounding farm areas.

**CHAMBERS:** Ernie Chambers, District 11, Omaha.

**KOLTERMAN:** Mark Kolterman, District 24, Seward, York, and Polk Counties.

**HUGHES:** Dan Hughes, District 44, ten counties in southwest Nebraska.

**HILGERS:** Thank you. We'll have some members coming in and out I think throughout the hearing. The order of the presentation, we'll go in the order of the agenda that is listed publicly on

the Web site, LB105 then LB283. We will go in the order of proponents, then opponents, then neutral testifiers. Before I get into some of our next pieces of housekeeping, can you raise your hand if you intend to testify today. OK. Thank you. So this committee is limited to over the lunch hour. At about 1:25, we are going to get kicked out of this committee hearing room. So two things are going to have to happen. One is we are going to limit-- normally we do five minutes. We are going to do three minutes for test-- testifiers with a hard break at three minutes. So you'll get two minutes and then the light will turn yellow. That will mean you have a minute left and then when it goes red we will have to have a hard stop. We want to accommodate everyone. The second thing is normally this committee, as like other committees, has a five o'clock deadline the day before to submit written testimony. For those of you who are here today, we will waive that requirement if you would-- if you would prefer to submit and have your written testimony submitted on the record. It'll be the same-- the same force and effect as if you're here to testify live. In order to make sure that that happens, we have a white sheet in the back that you can sign your name. And if you sign your name on that white sheet, you can submit your testimony and we'll waive the five o'clock deadline requirement. We want to make sure everyone's

voice is heard today. But because of the HVAC project, normally we would-- we could go over past 1:25. But because of the HVAC project, we have a committee hearing starting afterwards at 1:30 so we have to be really tight on time. So if you are able to or willing to submit your written testimony, I would strongly encourage you to do so to make sure your voice is heard for these particular hearings. Other than that, the only other housekeeping we have is please silence your cell phones. Most of the members of the committee, not all, Senator Chambers, use their-- have gone electronic and they have their laptops and phones out. They're using that, I can assure you, to research bills or amendments or things related to the legislation in front of us. So with that and understanding that we are tight on time, we'll start with LB105. Senator Linehan, you are welcome to open.

**LINEHAN:** Thank you, Chairman Hilgers. Thank you, committee. My name is Lou Ann Linehan, L-o-u A-n-n L-i-n-e-h-a-n. I represent District 39 which includes Elkhorn, Valley, Waterloo, and a small part of Millard. I'm here today to introduce LB105. LB105 is an idea that was presented to me when I visited a school district-- a school in my district, Reagan Elementary School, last December. The teacher is here today, Mrs.-- Mr. Thomas Whisinand, and his fourth grade students were studying Nebraska

government and the Legislature. I was invited to talk about the Unicameral and my job as a state senator. Mr. Whisinand is an excellent teacher who challenges students to come up with an idea for legislative bill. Students were surprised to find that Nebraska does not have a designated state vegetable and believe the Cornhusker State should designate corn as our state vegetable. The students presented letters to me asking me to consider such a proposal. They told me about corn production in Nebraska, acres designated to grow corn, different varieties of corn grown in the state, numbers of corn farmers, the money farmers receive when they harvest their corn crops. After reading the letters and making sure the students would stay engaged in the legislative process, I introduced LB105. Mr. Whisinand and several of his students are here today which I appreciate very much, especially considering the weather. They were unable to bring a bus to Lincoln to listen to the hearing so parents took time out of their busy schedules to drive the children to Lincoln. Students who were unable to find a ride to Lincoln are watching NET Web site, and I appreciate them too. After introducing legislation, Senator Chambers informed me that the Governor can actually do this without any action of the Legislature. However, I wanted to proceed with LB105 because the fourth graders at Reagan Elementary. They have worked very hard

to be involved in the legislative process and I appreciate-- appreciate this opportunity to present their idea to make corn the state vegetable. As you will see by a letter I handed out, I have contacted the teacher saying there's other ways to do this; and we hopefully will be pursuing that option too. Thank you very much.

**HILGERS:** Thank you, Senator Linehan. Are there any questions? Seeing none, we welcome any proponents. I didn't mentioned before but if you wish to testify, there's green sheets in the back. Please fill out the green sheet; and when you come up, please say and then spell your name. And if you don't spell your name, I will interrupt you just as politely as I can to remind you to spell your name. So proponents on LB105. Welcome. Please-- you can go-- you can go ahead and proceed.

**THOMAS WHISINAND:** Good afternoon, Senator Hilgers and members of the Executive Board. My name is Thomas Whisinand, spelled T-h-o-m-a-s W-h-i-s-i-n-a-n-d. I'm a fourth grade teacher at Reagan Elementary School in Millard Public Schools. I'm here to support LB105. As a fourth grade teacher in the great state of Nebraska, I'm charged with teaching my students a great number of facts about our amazing state. While some facts are fairly simple to recite and understand like the date Nebraska became a state,

which is March 1, 1867, other concepts are much more abstract and difficult for students to fully realize. One of the concepts has proven-- that has proven difficult for students to completely grasp is that of how an idea from an engaged citizen can be turned into a legislative bill and in turn how that legislative bill can become a law. Sir Richard Branson, the English billionaire, once said, the best way of learning anything is by doing. While the students in my fourth grade class are not billionaires, I know that they have learned an unbelievable amount from this experience. In the words of one of my students, we are doing real adult stuff. The idea for LB105 came from students who had read about a class in Florida that successfully lobbied their state legislature to make oranges the state fruit. A class discussion followed in which students decided that perhaps Nebraska needed a new state something. One student mentioned that since we are the Cornhuskers maybe we should be-- maybe corn should be our state vegetable. It just so happened that the next week we were going to collaborate with Miss Lisa Keech, our teacher librarian, to create an iBook about George Norris, the Unicameral, and how a law is made. During the research portion of this lesson, it seemed that many of the students were having a difficult time connecting the book learning about bills and committees to their own lives. In an

effort to make their learning as authentic as possible, I contacted the state senator for Reagan Elementary's attendance area, Senator Lou Ann Linehan, about the possibility of helping Reagan students better understand the legislative process in their state. Senator Linehan graciously agreed to come and share her legislative experience with the students of Reagan Elementary. As part of her visit, she was presented with some personal letters from fourth graders requesting that she introduce a bill that would name corn the official state vegetable of Nebraska. The fourth grade letter she was given had all been carefully handwritten, painstakingly researched, revised and edited countless times, and then neatly handwritten in hopes that their idea of Nebraska having an official state vegetable would not be lost on the senator simply because they were fourth graders and not adults. Senator Linehan visited Reagan Elementary in the middle of November last year. Shortly after her visit, we received an e-mail from her. In her e-mail she said that she would introduce a bill based on students' idea of corn becoming the state vegetable in Nebraska. When I shared the e-mail with the students, the response was priceless. Students cheered, they clapped, and some couldn't believe that their idea was actually going to be introduced as a bill. On January 10 when we received word that the students' idea was

introduced to the Nebraska Legislature as LB105, the students once again clapped, cheered, and became excited that their idea was actually listened to. On January 14 when we learned that LB105 was referred to the Executive Board, the students again could not believe that their idea not only became a bill but that it also was referred to this body.

**HILGERS:** I apologize I have to interrupt you. Normally we'd let you finish--

**THOMAS WHISINAND:** No problem.

**HILGERS:** --but we have your written testimony.

**THOMAS WHISINAND:** Yes, sir.

**HILGERS:** I greatly appreciate you coming down here on behalf of your students. Please pass along my thanks for their engagement--  
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**THOMAS WHISINAND:** I will.

**HILGERS:** --in this process. Are there any questions? Mr. Speaker.

**SCHEER:** Welcome. Thanks for coming.

**THOMAS WHISINAND:** Thank you.



**SCHEER:** I'm just thinking that you probably had something in your educational background earlier in your life that might have led you to become such an outstanding teacher. Just out of curiosity, where were your formative years spent educationally?

**THOMAS WHISINAND:** I'm a product of the Norfolk Public Schools.

[LAUGHTER]

**SCHEER:** Oh. It certainly makes sense then. OK. That's all

[INAUDIBLE].

**HILGERS:** Thank you. Senator Hughes.

**HUGHES:** Thank you for coming today. You did a very good job. How many-- how many students do you have in the fourth grade?

**THOMAS WHISINAND:** I have 26 in my class, sir.

**HUGHES:** OK. Very good. And you brought some of them with you today.

**THOMAS WHISINAND:** Yeah. They are in attendance. They have corn heads that they brought with them.

**HUGHES:** Very good. We're glad they're here.

**SCHEER:** Are any of them going to testify?

**THOMAS WHISINAND:** No.

**HUGHES:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**HILGERS:** Go ahead, Mr. Speaker.

**SCHEER:** If they're not going to testify, can we please ask them to stand so that at least we can recognize them by numbers?

**HILGERS:** Sure absolutely. So you're in the-- yeah. How many brought corn in? Great, thank you. Are there any other questions? Thank you very much for coming down today.

**THOMAS WHISINAND:** Thank you all, appreciate it.

**HILGERS:** And thank you all for coming down. Are there any other proponents wishing to testify on LB105? Anyone wishing to speak in opposition? Seeing none, anyone wishing to testify in a neutral capacity? Seeing none, Senator Linehan. Senator Linehan. Senator Linehan waives closing. We have no-- we have two letters: one in opposition from Richard Schama [PHONETIC] from Alliance and one in the neutral capacity from Nebraska Corn Growers Association. That will close our hearing on LB105. We'll turn to LB283. I will remind those, especially those who have come in since my initial remarks, we will be kicked out of this room a little over an hour from now. We will be having a three-

minute time for proponents, opponents, and neutral testifiers. If you-- that does not mean you have to take three minutes if you'd like to do fewer than that. That would help those behind you. And in order to make sure your voice is heard, we are waiving the five o'clock deadline from yesterday. If you're-- if you aren't able to testify in person, if you put your name on the white sheet in the back we'll let you submit your written testimony and have that be part of the official public record. With that, Senator Pansing Brooks, you're welcome to open.

**PANSING BROOKS:** Thank you, Chair Hilgers and members of the Executive Board. For the record, I am Patty Pansing Brooks, P-a-t-t-y P-a-n-s-i-n-g B-r-o-o-k-s, representing District 28 right here in the heart of Lincoln. I'm here today to introduce LB 283 today so that Nebraska can better prepare for the increasing effects of climate change including drought, pests, fires, floods, soil "erusion"-- erosion, and extreme weather patterns. In 2016, I sat on the LR455 special committee to examine issues related to climate change. Former senators Tyson Larson and Ken Haar chaired this committee. Former senators John Kuehn, Heath Mello, and Ken Schilz were also on that committee, as was Senator John Stinner. The conclusion of our final report said, quote, It is time for the state of Nebraska to create a climate action plan. The plan should be based on empirical evidence and

Nebraska-based data. Making use of Nebraska expertise and developed through outreach to the public and coordinating public and private sectors-- and sector interests, end quote. I provided copies of LR455 report for your information. The LR455 recommendation follows a 2014 University of Nebraska-Lincoln report entitled "Understanding and Assessing Climate Change Implications for Nebraska." This report also recommended that Nebraska develop a climate action plan. LB283 is the next step to move us toward that goal. LB283 directs the University of Nebraska to develop a strategic climate action plan that will provide methods for adapting to and mitigating the impacts of climate change in Nebraska. Thirty-four states have already adopted climate action plans. And with so much at stake in Nebraska, it is long past time that we follow suit. As the UNL report stated five years ago, "Action now is preferable and more cost effective than reaction later." People are becoming keenly aware of the implications for Nebraska if we do not act. Agriculture, water, healthcare, energy, energy generation and usage, ecosystems, forestry, rural and urban communities, transportation, healthcare, and commerce and industry are sectors all impacted by these extreme weather conditions. Nebraska's life-giving water and soil resources continue to be subject to new stressors and risks. Rural Nebraskans understand

this. A 2015 Nebraska rural poll found that 61 percent of rural Nebraskans supported the creation of a climate action plan. So we must plan ahead to respond appropriately, the same as we would plan for any disaster. I remember as a child at Sheldon-- Shell-- at Sheridan Elementary School here in Lincoln that we had tornado drills. This is no different. It is common sense to protect ourselves, our state resources, and our economic security. So LB283 is about preparedness and mitigating damages. It is about resilient--a resiliency plan to protect our state's interests. It is also important that any task force include input and collaboration from the experts that we have here in Nebraska. We're blessed with the University of Nebraska experts, and I can think of no institution or organ-- or organization better equipped to lead this. Utilizing our own state resources will also be much more cost effective than to tackle this issue by hiring out-of-state contractors. There would be no general-- There will be no General Fund impact for this study as we are able to tap into related cash funding called the Waste Recycling and Investment Fund. This is a fund that builds up \$4 million-- more than \$4 million every year. By 2020, there will be plenty of money in the fund to create a one-time use of \$250,000 for the climate action plan for our state. I know we have a number of people who are waiting to testify so I promised to keep it

short. So in closing, I just ask that you advance LB283. Thank you.

**HILGERS:** Thank you, Senator Pansing Brooks. Are there any questions? Mr. Speaker.

**SCHEER:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Senator Pansing Bolz-- Pansing Brooks, my apologies, I received a note in relationship to the funding source from the folks out in North Platte, and they were concerned because they have had to reduce their budget substantially over the last several years and are concerned that this would even impact them greater than it already has.

**PANSING BROOKS:** With the waste-- the Waste Recycling Investment Fund?

**SCHEER:** Um-hum.

**PANSING BROOKS:** I am-- I have heard some, you know, concerns back and forth over which fund to use. There's another fund. I'm willing to discuss it with people. This fund by 2020, it has-- it has decreased; but by 2020, we've been told that it will be back up to over \$4 million. So at that point, a \$250,000 one-time payment for a plan set forth by our state, which former legislators suggested occur, seems reasonable. But I'm happy to

work with anybody if there's a better idea out there. Do you have another thought?

**SCHEER:** I don't. I just--

**PANSING BROOKS:** OK.

**SCHEER:** But if you have other options, that might be something that-- I hate to continue to minimize their ability to do the things on a local basis as well so--

**PANSING BROOKS:** Right.

**SCHEER:** --concern.

**PANSING BROOKS:** This will help everybody, too, so I'm happy to talk with them and talk with others about what the best plan is. Thank you for asking.

**HILGERS:** Thank you, Speaker Scheer. Are there any other questions? Seeing none, thank you, Senator. Will you stick around for closing?

**PANSING BROOKS:** Thank you. Yes, I will just in case.

**HILGERS:** Thank you. Before we start with proponents, can you raise your hand if you're wishing to testify in support? Are there other-- those here wishing to testify in opposition? And

what about neutral? So what we'll do is we will hear from proponents for about 30 minutes and then we will transition to opponents for probably about 15 given the volume right now and then we'll allow the neutral testifier to testify and then we'll come back to proponents. So with that, Senator Haar, welcome.

**KEN HAAR:** Welcome. Yes, Chairman Hilgers and friends, I've sat up there many hours in the past. My story: On February 19, nine days from now I will be cracked open by a team of surgeons at UNMC and my aortic heart valve will be replaced with a pig valve. Now in 2013 I had a mild heart attack and I had to face the challenge that I had-- that I have a heart disease. And after almost six years have passed, I keep getting more and more tired and have less energy, more naps and so on. And then last November when I went to the emergency room with chest pains, the doctors concluded I hadn't had another heart attack; but he said my aortic valve is leaking and it's deteriorating. So that's very scary. My options: ignore the experts and do nothing; shrug off the urgency; go doctor hopping until I hear a doctor that I want to hear; put off doing anything until I'm really hurting; or I can act now. And I've chosen the latter two: to take action and November 19 will be the surgery. Now my thing today is this: climate change is global heart disease. First it's scary because it's real. According to reports published last Wednesday,



February 6, by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, NOAA, the last five years from 2014 to 2018 are the warmest years ever recorded in the 139 years that NOAA has been tracking global heat since 1880. And 2018 was the fourth hottest year ever recorded. Like my heart disease, this-- the situation is deteriorating. Climate change is affecting Nebraska now and will have more and more impact as time goes on. And if you give me a half an hour in your office, I'd be happy to give you more detail on how we're being affected right now. Climate change offers the same options as I have with my heart disease: ignore the experts and do nothing; shrug off the surgery; go scientist hopping until you hear what you want to hear; put off doing anything until the impacts can't be ignored. But one big difference The heart-- my heart disease affects only me, but climate change is going to affect every child on this planet. So a critical question: Who are the experts you listen to? And if you remember from Ghostbusters, if there's something strange in your neighborhood, who are you gonna call? Ghostbusters. Well, who do you call for heart disease? You don't go to plumbers, you don't go to accountants, but cardiologists. And who do you call for climate change? Not retired oil executives, not politicians, but climate scientists. And you have two of those today: Martha Shulski and Dr. Jesse Bell. But there is 100 percent unit--

almost 100 percent unanimity among climate scientists that there is global--

**HILGERS:** Senator Haar.

**KEN HAAR:** --warming is real and humans [INAUDIBLE].

**HILGERS:** And I apologize. I'm sorry.

**KEN HAAR:** I know.

**HILGERS:** We want to make sure everyone's voice is heard. We'll ask for questions. Would you mind-- I didn't interrupt you at the beginning-- would you mind spelling your name for the record.

**KEN HAAR:** Yeah. H-a-a-r.

**HILGERS:** Thank you. Are there any questions?

**KEN HAAR:** I'd just like to say obviously I think we need a climate action bill, and I want to thank Senator Pansing Brooks.

**HILGERS:** Thank you, Senator Haar. For the record, Senator Haar my predecessor in District 21. It's good to see you down here today.

**KEN HAAR:** You bet. Thank you.

**HILGERS:** Are there other proponents? Well, there are other proponents. The next proponent, please. Welcome.

**MARTHA SHULSKI:** Good afternoon. My name is Martha Shulski, M-a-r-t-h-a, Shulski, S-h-u-l-s-k-i. I come to you today in support of LB283. I'm a Nebraska native whose roots are in the agricultural community and whose ancestors survived the Dust Bowl. But I'm here today because I'm a professor of applied climate science in the School of Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln. I lead the state climate office where I also serve as the Nebraska state climatologist. My education is in meteorology, agronomy, soil science, and climatology. My first professional job was at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, a state that is literally on the frontline of climate change. I now teach a UNL course about the science of climate change where we discuss the signs, the symptoms, and the solutions to the rapid changes. Climate change is ultimately, ultimately a local issue that is already impacting us and we need salient local solutions such as the development of an action plan outlined in the bill. Today I'm speaking on behalf of my own knowledge and experience and not that of the university. You might be asking yourself why do we have a state climate office? We exist to track Nebraska's ever-changing weather conditions through our state weather network and collect

the observations long enough so that we have our own climate record. From this record, we know that temperatures have risen and springs are increasingly wetter. We also exist to put a seasonal climate outlook into perspective and to help people decipher complicated climate model projections, answering the question how will climate change impact my operations and what can I do about it. Last year we were invited to give 56 talks to more than 4,000 people to help individuals and agencies plan for change. We serve farmers and ranchers, natural resource districts, public power utilities, water managers, cities, Rotarians, business leaders, the media, state agencies, and so on, your constituents essentially. Our job is to compile, synthesize, and translate complex climate data so that it can be used for decision making in a meaningful way. We help people look at climate scenarios and manage their risk to our state's variable and changing climate. I am currently working with three Nebraska towns to do just that. A few weeks ago when I was giving my lecture about extreme events and preparedness in class, I have a student here with me today, I asked my students: When is the best time to plan for a tornado? When the sirens are going off and it's headed your way? They all gave me a resounding no. It's best to have thought about it in advance, determine a secure location, and have your severe weather kit

already. We experience natural hazards in Nebraska and we plan for those events. We have a state drought plan. Cities and towns have hazard mitigation plans. When is the best time to plan for a changing climate? That time is now. It will behoove the health and well-being of the citizens of Nebraska, our livelihoods, and our economy if we have a thorough assessment of climate change impacts and a path forward for lessening our contribution to future climate change. I'm a mother and I care deeply about the health of my children and the world, what the world will be like when they are middle-aged like me when the average temperatures in Lincoln will be like that of present day Topeka, Kansas. I'm out of time.

**HILGERS:** Thank you. Thank you, Ms. Shulski. Are there any questions? Seeing none, thank you for coming down today. Thank you.

**MARTHA SHULSKI:** Thank you.

**HILGERS:** The next proponent, please. Welcome.

**JAMES CAVANAUGH:** Mr. Chairman, members of the Executive Board, my name is James Cavanaugh. I'm an attorney and registered lobbyist for the Sierra Club of Nebraska, also appearing on behalf of the Public Health Association in Nebraska and you'll

see the testimony submitted by Dr. David Corbin on their behalf. The Sierra Club supports LB283. As President Teddy Roosevelt, my favorite 20th century Republican President, said: Do what you can with what you have where you are. This is that thing. Sierra Club believes Nebraska ought to have long ago initiated planning and action on climate change. We're pragmatists. We seek to avoid letting the perfect be the enemy of the good. So the Sierra Club welcomes the actions proposed by LB 283 regarding climate change. Especially heartening is LB283's recitation of the many prior efforts to detail the effects of and need to address climate change in Nebraska. One expressed concern with LB283 has been the cash fund used to fund the study. LB580 by Senator Hilkemann amends this very fee. This landfill tipping fee is long overdue to be adjusted and the Sierra Club supports doing so. LB580 increases the existing decades-old \$1,25 fee by 75 cents. This increase is warranted because of the shrinking real value of this fee and has been shrinking the grants to local governments to address environmental issues. In conclusion, the Sierra Club commends Senator Pansing Brooks for her proactive stands on climate change. Over 3,000 Nebraska members urge you to advance LB243. Thank you. I'd be happy to answer any questions.

**HILGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Cavanaugh. Are there any questions?

Seeing none, thank you for coming down today.

**JAMES CAVANAUGH:** Thanks very much.

**HILGERS:** Thanks for leaving some time for the next person. Next proponent, please. Welcome.

**ALAN VOVOLKA:** Hello my name's Alan Vovolka. I'm representing Omaha Together One Community.

**HILGERS:** Mind spelling your name as well.

**ALAN VOVOLKA:** Just the way it sounds. V-o-v-o-l-k-a and Alan is A-l-a-n.

**HILGERS:** Thank you.

**ALAN VOVOLKA:** I'm representing Omaha Together One Community which is an organization of about 18 churches and allied nonprofits. And I'm here to remind you of the moral imperative to deal with climate change which is possibly the most critical crisis facing the entire world at this time. On a more personal note, I'd like to bring up a couple of things. One, since we had children here earlier, I was reminded of my own childhood when I was a Boy Scout and the motto of the Boy Scouts is be prepared. It just seems like common sense to me. The other thing that the

students reminded me of is that this is about them. Young people are going to have to live with the consequences far longer than I'm going to have to live with them. The other thing it reminded me of was that there is strong interest in making corn the state vegetable in the state of Nebraska because there is a strong interest in growing corn in the state of Nebraska. And anyone here who would care to check with the University of Nebraska's Extension Service will learn that once the nighttime temperatures don't get below 80 degrees Fahrenheit during corn pollination season, we're going to have a hard time growing corn in the state of Nebraska. Let's not let that happen. Thank you very much.

**HILGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Vovolka. Are there any questions? One second before you-- seeing none, thank you for coming down today. Next proponent, please. Welcome.

**KIM MORROW:** Good afternoon. Thank you. My name is Kim Morrow. M-o-r-r-o-w. I'm here today to offer my strong but qualified support of LB283, a distinction which I will explain in a moment. I have been involved at a professional level in climate change education and outreach efforts in Nebraska for nearly ten years. I currently serve as a senior associate with the Verdis Group, an environmental sustainability consulting company



headquartered in Omaha. Before taking my current position, I worked at UNL with Dr. Don Wilhite on climate change education and outreach efforts. As you may know, Dr. Wilhite is an internationally recognized climatologist and the lead author of the 2014 UNL report that details projected climate change impacts to Nebraska. I worked with him in 2015 and 2016 when we took the work to the next level by hosting a series of eight sector-based roundtables with key stakeholder groups in Nebraska. Over the course of many months, we brought together hundreds of industry leaders, subject matter experts, and key stakeholders to have discussions on the implications of climate change to each of these sectors. By the end of the series, one thing was clear: To protect Nebraska's people, its economy, and its natural resources, we need to engage in the critical work of creating a state climate action plan. When it is finished, this plan will provide a clear assessment of our current greenhouse gas emissions and climate preparedness efforts. It will set goals for reducing emissions and increasing our resilience to climate change. And it will articulate clear strategies for ensuring the thriving of our great state in the face of unprecedented challenges to come. More importantly perhaps the process of creating this plan will initiate a practice of having key stakeholders engage in important cross-sectoral

conversations in order to arrive at the best solutions for all Nebraskans. In my current work at Verdis Group, I help our clients to create climate resiliency plans. I see firsthand the important realizations that come when community leaders understand their climate risks and the forward-thinking plans they put in motion to protect their communities' quality of life. Across the country, cities and states are preparing for the significant changes that are or will soon be affecting how they operate. Currently 34 states have climate action plans, including Montana, Arkansas, and Kentucky. It's time for Nebraska to join these ranks. Finally, I want to explain my qualified support of this bill. As someone who works on both climate and recycling initiatives, I do not believe the Waste Reduction and Recycling grant pool should be used to fund this initiative. There are too many programs that depend on these grants and they are too important to be sacrificed. I, therefore, strongly urge the committee to identify a different funding mechanism and then to strongly support this important bill. With this effort, we will protect the good life far into the future. Thank you.

**HILGERS:** Thank you, Ms. Morrow. Are there questions? Seeing none, thank you for coming down today. Next proponent. Welcome.

**DONNA GARDEN:** Thank you. Good afternoon. My name is Donna Garden, that's D-o-n-n-a G-a-r-d-e-n, and I am the assistant director of the city of Lincoln transportation utilities. I'm here today to testify expressing the city of Lincoln's support for LB283. The city supports the need for a climate change report for the state of Nebraska and we do support this bill. We certainly echo many of the sentiments we've heard already and I'm sure we'll hear after this as well. I would, however, like to offer some alternatives to that funding source that we talked about before. And that's why I'm here today to give a little bit of additional information on that. In 1990, legislation was passed establishing a disposal fee charged to each operator of municipal landfills in Nebraska, of which Lincoln has one. Lincoln owns and operates the Bluff Road landfill, and we pay this fee to the state on every ton of waste that's disposed there. This amounts to about three hundred, four hundred thousand dollars per year. The disposal fee at \$1.25 per ton of solid waste disposed at the landfill was established by statute. State statute 13-2042 specifically directs that 50 percent of this fee be used to perform regulated activities under the Solid Waste Management Act, that's with NDEQ, and the Nebraska Litter Reduction Recycling Act and Waste Reduction and Recycling Act. The remaining 50 percent of this fee is designated for the Waste

Reduction Recycling Incentive Fund. This is the fund that this \$250,000 would come from, and it is specifically for funding grants for communities, municipalities, and agencies. Grants are awarded to projects that further the goals of the Integrated Waste Management Act. And in addition, funds are provided for response to and remediation of any solid waste that's disposed of or abandoned. The city of Lincoln and Lancaster County governments have received approximately \$1.9 million from these funds in the past; and it goes to fund many of our programs, including recycling and our household hazardous waste programs. These grant funds are essential to promoting smart, resilient waste management and NDEQ always receives more requests for grant dollars than they have dollars coming in. Grant dollars are used for financial support for recycling systems, the identification/development of recycling markets, processing facilities, yard waste composting, composting with sludge, waste reduction, household hazardous waste programs, and many, many more things. From 2011 through 2016, this program awarded \$12 million in grants for recycling and composting and waste reduction. However, last year \$900,000 of this fund was diverted to the state General Fund for nonsolid waste management purposes. This study diverts another \$250,000. So instead of taking this path for funding, I'm recommending today that there

might be other funds that we could look at to evaluate for this important climate study. The criteria for the waste sustainability fund that is established by Legislature and for the Nebraska Environmental Trust--

**HILGERS:** Ms. Garden, Ms. Garden, I'm sorry. I apologize. I'll have to cut you off there.

**DONNA GARDEN:** OK.

**HILGERS:** Are there questions? Go ahead, Senator Bolz.

**BOLZ:** I would be curious if you have any details on other available cash funds.

**DONNA GARDEN:** The-- the two funds that I mentioned, the water sustainability fund and the Nebraska Environmental Trust, both align with the goals of the climate study and I think those should be looked at. And we'd really like to work with the committee and with the senator and thank her very much for bringing this bill forward.

**BOLZ:** Thank you.

**HILGERS:** Thank you, Senator Bolz. Are there other questions? Seeing none, thank you, Ms. Garden, for coming down to testify today.

**DONNA GARDEN:** Thank you.

**HILGERS:** Next proponent. Welcome.

**ALAN MOELLER:** Chairman, excuse me, Chairman Hilgers and members of the Executive Board, my name is Alan Moeller, A-l-a-n M-o-e-l-l-e-r. I am here today representing the Nebraska Elder Climate Legacy, a group in strong support of LB283. Our group is concerned with the legacy we are leaving our grandchildren. I would not want my grandchildren to someday say, Grandpa, your generation knew what was happening. Why didn't you do something about it? The planet is warming. We are moving from a debate about whether it is happening to what are we going to do about it. The overwhelming majority of climate scientists, 97 percent, have concluded the planet's warming is mostly human caused. The majority of Americans believe that as well. If 97 out of 100 structural engineers concluded that a house was unsafe, would we ignore their conclusion? The reality is that at a minimum we have to adapt. A farmer friend of mine told me relative to climate change: Farmers have always had to adapt. This is true. However, it sure helps to know how to adapt. However, we need to do more. No group will be affected more by climate change than farmers and ranchers. Climate is as key an element to their prosperity or failure as land and water and weather has a big

impact on both. Atmospheric CO2 concentrations are at the highest levels during any of the natural cycles occurring over the last 800,000 years. We have deviated from the natural cycle. At these levels, we are in uncharted territory with no historical basis to estimate the consequences. We need to do all we can to reduce the degree of projected warming. We need a plan to identify and implement methods to mitigate climate change, especially those solutions which result in economic and social benefits which pay for themselves. What does it say about the need for mitigation when Forbes reported in December of 2018 that a global group of 415 investors managing \$32 trillion in assets released a combined statement urging governments to accelerate their actions to mitigate climate change? LB283 is quite comprehensive in laying out what the university is supposed to address in developing the strategic plan. The university's 2014 reports have been mentioned. Now they need to update, expand, and refine the adaptation and mitigation measures, set baselines, set measurable benchmarks and goals, and address policy recommendations for appropriate action. If what scientists tell us is a hoax, it is certainly a well-orchestrated, internationally coordinated hoax. Let's not bet our grandchildren's future because the consequences are huge.

**HILGERS:** Mr. Moeller, I'm sorry I have to cut you off. Are there any questions? Senator Kolterman.

**KOLTERMAN:** Thank you for coming to testify today. Good information. Just out of curiosity, what is your background?

**ALAN MOELLER:** Well, I'm an ag economist by background, grew up on a farm, worked for the university for 36 years, worked for the Legislative Fiscal Office for four years, so-- and other jobs.

**KOLTERMAN:** All right. Thank you very much.

**HILGERS:** Thank you, Senator Kolterman. Thank you for coming down. Next proponent. And I would remind those who have come in since the beginning, I'll reiterate my announcement that I-- in order to accommodate as many people as we can in light of the fact we will be kicked out of his room at about 1:25 I will-- please keep an eye on the clock because I will be having to cut-- enforce the three-minute deadline. So go ahead, please.

**JESSE BELL:** Good afternoon. My name is Jesse Bell, J-e-s-s-e B-e-l-l. I am the Claire M. Hubbard Professor of Health and Environment in the College of Public Health at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. Before taking my current appointment, I worked jointly between the Centers for Disease Control and



Prevention and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Before that I was born and raised in Bloomfield, Nebraska. I'm speaking as a private citizen on LB283. I do not speak for the university and my comments do not represent an official position from the University of Nebraska. In 2016, I was a lead author on the federal interagency document titled "The Impacts of Climate Change on Human Health: A Scientific Assessment." This report brought together scientists, medical doctors, healthcare professionals, and a variety of other experts to understand the impacts of climate change on human health in the United States. Representation on this report include the private sector, academia, and federal agencies including NASA, NOAA, Department of Defense, CDC, EPA, and many others. This is one of the first assessments of its kind, as it solely focused on the impacts that climate change has on human health. Based on the consensus of every expert associated with this report and the evaluation of countless external reviewers, the main key finding is that climate change is a significant threat to the health of the American people and that all Americans are vulnerable to the health impacts associated climate change. Our nation and our state is facing increased health threats from human-induced climate change. Rising greenhouse gas concentrations result in increases in

temperature, changes in precipitation, increases in frequency and intensity of some extreme weather events, and rising sea levels. As you can imagine, these changes in our climate are already threatening our lives by affecting the food-- our food and water, our air, the natural disasters that we face, and the livability of our communities. As our climate continues to change, the risk to our health will continue to grow. A clear example of the health impact of climate change is the relationship between rising temperatures and the lengthening of the pollen season for many allergic plant species. Ragweed has experienced an increase in the pollen season by over ten days in Nebraska. Numerous public health departments across the country are already evaluating and addressing the health threats from climate change. These departments are evaluating the risks, devising plans, implementing strategies to reduce the potential impacts. This work does not only help address climate change but it strengthens our communities from any future threat that we may face. Climate change is a threat to our health and the time is to act now. So thank you very much.

**HILGERS:** Thank you, Professor Bell. Are there questions? Senator Bolz.

**BOLZ:** I don't want to put words in your mouth, but it-- just to put a finer point on part of what I think you're communicating, page 4, line 28 of the bill says that the study should include "Input from entomological, climate, water, agricultural, and natural resource experts in Nebraska." You might add public health?

**JESSE BELL:** I would definitely add public health.

**BOLZ:** Thank you.

**HILGERS:** Are there other questions? Thank you, Senator Bolz. Seeing none, thank you, Professor.

**JESSE BELL:** Thank you.

**HILGERS:** We'll take the next three proponents and then, as I announced earlier, we will switch to opponents for about 15 minutes, neutral, and then we'll get as many proponents as we can. After that if you would like to have your written testimony put in the record, please fill out-- you put your name on the white sheet. Please go ahead.

**MIKE KROS:** Mike Kros, K-r-o-s. I'm an architect representing the American Institute of Architects Nebraska Chapter which is approximately 600 members, 95 firms across the state from small

to large. Typically there is at least a few firms that are the top ten-- in the top ten largest architectural firms in the country that are based or started in Nebraska. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of LB283 enabling the University of Nebraska to develop evidence-based, data-driven, strategic action plan to provide methods for adopting-- adapting to and mitigating the impacts of climate change. Having a plan is a critical step to any type of issue that needs to be addressed. Creating a plan to address one of the most important issues of our time is imperative. The negative economic and human consequences of not addressing climate change can be minimized. The goal should be to stop and reverse those issues. At the same time, it can become a positive economic opportunity for Nebraska as people and as businesses. Architects play a vital role in combating climate change. Buildings are major producers of carbon. In fact, almost 40 percent of U.S. energy is consumed by buildings which produce carbon through heating, cooling, lighting, and through their construction. AIA is in support of integrating renewable energy sources into buildings making them more sustainable, resilient, and economical. Health and productivity can be increased by a reduction of operational and embodied carbon production within certain design techniques, energy-efficient measures, and low-impact building materials.

Current federal policies that set goals by 2030 for carbon neutrality in federal buildings are already creating major advances in energy efficiency design. Collaboration is the key to climate change mitigation. AIA Nebraska aspires to be part of the conversation relating to climate change and specifically the design and construction of carbon-neutral buildings in Nebraska. On a personal note, it is important to me to do everything I can to allow my grandchildren to have the same or better opportunities in the world that I did. If we do not aggressively address climate change issues, I feel this opportunity will not be there for them. Thank you.

**HILGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Kros. Are there questions? Seeing none, thank you for coming down. Next proponent. Welcome.

**KATIE TORPY CARROLL:** Thank you. Thank you for the opportunity. My name is Katie Torpy Carroll. I'm representing The Nature Conservancy today. My name is spelled K-a-t-i-e T-o-r-p-y C-a-r-r-o-l-l. We are in support of the LB283. Projecting climate-related costs incurred by a business-as-usual scenario, the combined impacts of higher mortality and harm to our agricultural systems could cause Nebraska's economy to contract nearly 5 percent by 2080. This is a conservative estimate from the Brookings Institute. The continued absence of a climate

action plan not only leaves Nebraskans vulnerable but also leaves us unable to capitalize on solutions that benefit our economy and the environment right here now. Some of those-- The Nature Conservancy is ready to help with those solutions. We call them natural climate solutions. These are a suite of land management strategies, all of which lead to a significant reduction in emissions while providing habitat for wildlife and economic-- economic gains for people. To illustrate this, 37 percent of the emissions reductions needed, needed can be achieved by these natural climate solutions. Examples of these include preventing more grassland from being plowed up, expanding sustainable agricultural practices, and protecting wetlands. Our landscape offers another important set of solutions that is similarly unrealized: renewable energy expansion. Twenty-one-- twenty-one times the amount of land area necessary to meet the Department of Energy's 2030 wind production goal in the state can be met on already impacted land. So that's already disturbed lands, not our grasslands. And yet scaling up these solutions remains a challenge. Thirty-four states, as has been mentioned, have already engaged in similar planning. Let Nebraskans be among those meeting the challenge head on in a way that enhances our overall resilience and

safeguards our economy. Without thoughtful planning, we can't envision that there are solutions to this problem. Thank you.

**HILGERS:** Thank you, Ms. Torpy Carroll.

**KATIE TORPY CARROLL:** Any questions?

**HILGERS:** Are there questions? Senator Bolz.

**BOLZ:** I have a question. You seem to have some expertise in this area. Would you be able to give me a couple of examples of some of the positive outcomes of other states' plans?

**KATIE TORPY CARROLL:** Of other states' plans. Well, I think getting to renewable energy portfolio standards, setting recommendations for drawing down our carbon impact, certainly mitigation efforts as opposed to just focusing on adaptation. There's cobenefits that can be derived from efficiency-- irrigation efficiency measures, for instance, where you're reducing the inputs of fertilizer, you're reducing the inputs of water, and there's less runoff and less greenhouse gases absorbed and we build up the soil matter through that agri-- that agricultural practice.

**BOLZ:** That's, that's helpful. This isn't my area of expertise, but it's reassuring to know that there were specific

recommendations that were actively implemented as the direct result of other states' plans. Could you, could you, is that correct?

**KATIE TORPY CARROLL:** I couldn't point to which state that-- it's all blurring together in my head right now. But I, I I think I could connect you with some of that information. I'd have to verify the one I'm thinking of so, yeah.

**BOLZ:** OK. Thank you.

**HILGERS:** Thank you, Senator Bolz. Senator McCollister.

**McCOLLISTER:** Yeah. Thank you for your testimony. Could you, just following up on Senator Bolz's question, can you provide us good examples of good state plans that we could, that we could model and look to?

**KATIE TORPY CARROLL:** I do have some literature. It's-- they're leaving my head right now on the spot. I'm sorry. But I'd be glad to follow up and connect with some, with some examples that I think are productive.

**McCOLLISTER:** That would be great. Thank you.

**HILGERS:** Thank you, Senator McCollister. Any other questions? Seeing none, thank you for coming down today.



**KATIE TORPY CARROLL:** Thank you.

**HILGERS:** Take one more proponent then we'll switch to opponents, do neutral, and we'll come back with whatever time we have left for proponents. Welcome.

**FRANCIS MENDENHALL:** Thank you. Glad to be here and thank you for the opportunity to address you all today. My name is Francis Mendenhall, M-e-n-d-e-n-h-a-l-l, and I am a member of Citizens Climate Lobby but I'm just speaking for myself today. Our group advocates for carbon pricing. I just want to make one really quick point in the interest of time and, and it's about money. A couple of days ago the World-Herald had an article in it about the increased incidence of billion dollar weather-related disasters-- a billion dollars. And the short, short summary of the story is that in recent years those incidents have doubled. Why would we not spend \$250,000 to get ready for an increased likelihood of billion dollar events? That's all.

**HILGERS:** Thank you, Ms. Mendenhall. Are there questions? Seeing none, thank you for coming down today. We will switch temporarily to opponents. If you're opposition testimony, please come forward. How many opponents do we have wishing to testify? OK. We'll go about 15 minutes and then we'll-- is our neutral testifier still here? He's gone. OK. OK. Please go ahead.

**JANE POLSON:** Good afternoon. My name is Jane, J-a-n-e, Polson, P-o-l-s-o-n, and I'm the president of Keep Nebraska Beautiful. And I won't be labor what I was going to talk about because it's been talked about. But my opposition is transferring the \$250,000 from the Waste Reduction Recycling Incentive Grant Fund. I've outlined in the testimony the specific narrowly defined areas that are the purpose for that grant and climate change doesn't fit within that. As I looked though at other options, I really do think that the Nebraska Environmental Trust may be a likely source. I kind of outlined some of their purposes for that money. They grant over \$18 million a year, the Waste Reduction and Recycling Fund. Well, it's been-- the money had transfers out the last two years. But even in the good years it only gives out about \$2.4 million, \$2.5 million. So maybe \$4 million comes in, but that's not what goes out in grant funds. So it's a very small fund that's been hit for the last two years. It doesn't fit the criteria for climate change so I'm just suggesting look at the Environmental Trust because I think it would. So with that, I'd just entertain any questions.

**HILGERS:** OK. Thank you, Ms. Polson. Are there questions? Senator McCollister.

**McCOLLISTER:** Yeah. Thank you for your-- your attendance here. If it weren't for the money issue, you-- would you be in support of this bill?

**JANE POLSON:** Yeah. I don't have any problem with the study. I have a problem with where the money is set right now to come out of.

**McCOLLISTER:** Thank you.

**JANE POLSON:** Yes.

**HILGERS:** Thank you, McCollister. Are there other questions? Seeing none, thank you for coming down today, Ms. Polson.

**JANE POLSON:** Thanks.

**HILGERS:** Next opponent. Welcome.

**RICK YODER:** Thank you. My name is Rick Yoder, Y-o-d-e-r. I submitted testimony on Friday and supposedly you have that. A little bit about me: I created, cocreated, and cotaught climate change sustainability and public health over at UNMC starting back in 2010; did that for a few years with UNMC ethicist Andrew Jameton. I am a contributor to the 2015 sector-based roundtable discussions that followed up the report that was mentioned in 2014. I was a member of LB1101 solid waste management study and

I am a board member of Keep Cass County Beautiful, one of the [INAUDIBLE] affiliates. Also there are many other things. It's in my testimony. So there is a tension here for me. I think that the climate change study is-- a climate change plan is an important action. It would be better if there were more action involved because those-- we've been discussing this for many years. I first had the course in 2010, right? And the plan doesn't take place for another two years. So it's time to have some action. But my, my opposition to the bill is not about that. That can be improved-- I'm happy with the fact that we've got a plan-- is that it takes money away from worthwhile programs. So there are several points to that. One is that the funding from-- as designated in the way that it was written-- supports all Nebraska communities all around. And the second element is that that money is doubled at least with the amount of match that goes into it. So by giving it to the university, there's no match that's asked for. There's no additional contributions. So you're losing the effectiveness of the funding. There are other funding sources that exist because one creative option might be that because the climate footprint of Nebraska is over 25 percent of it is due to transportation, you could-- the university could simply tack on a parking fee to, to any of the vehicles that are internal combustion engines. And

I'm sure they would come up with \$250,000 pretty quick. As mentioned several times, we could replenish the fund that is now funding. So the other thing, the climate plan is a good thing. I wish it were longer on action. So I support the fact that this is happening. It's long overdue. It's not enough. But the deal killer for me is the funding.

**HILGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Yoder. Are there questions? Seeing none, thank you for coming down today. Next opponent. Welcome.

**LINDA BEHRNS:** Good afternoon. My name is Linda Behrns, L-i-n-d-a B-e-h-r-n-s. I'm the executive director of a nonprofit organization called Keep Cass County Beautiful. Our mission is to educate, enable, and encourage all of our Cass County residents to take greater care of their environment. I am opposed to this source of funding, as others have mentioned, from the Waste Reduction and Recycling Incentive Fund for LB283. Our organization and county have been fortunate to receive several Waste Reduction and Recycling Incentive Fund grants in the past. But in the last two years, the Legislature has transferred a total of \$1,400,000 from this fund to support other programs. So as a result, our county was unable to hold our annual tire amnesty day collection. If passed, LB283 will result in another decrease in funds that support local recycling

and waste management programs. I am not opposed to the climate change study but wonder why this program was selected to fund this bill. The Waste Reduction and Recycling Incentive Grant program was specifically developed to assist in financing waste management programs and projects such as recycling systems, waste reduction and materials exchange, household hazardous waste programs, and similar projects. Our project that was funded was an electronics recycling collection where we annually collect approximately 20,000 pounds of electronic waste. The grants are funded from three sources: a \$25 business fee on all retail businesses with sales of at least \$50,000; a \$1.25 per ton disposal fee assessed for all waste disposal and municipal solid waste landfills; and a \$1 tire fee that is charged on each new tire sold in Nebraska. This grant program supports specific waste reduction and recycling programs that benefit all Nebraskans. By transferring funds again from this program, our citizens will be losing the support of many quality programs. I believe this automatic transfer to-- is-- does not match the intended goals of the waste management program and sends the wrong message to Nebraska citizens. I recommend the Nebraska Environmental Trust as an alternative source of funding that better matches the purpose of LB283. Thank you.

**HILGERS:** Thank you, Ms. Behrns. Are there questions? Senator Bolz.

**BOLZ:** Just a point of information. I appreciate your perspective. I understand how important these funds are to local communities. But I do think it's important for the record to say that reading from the statute of the Waste Reduction and Recycling Incentive Fund the statute says: allocations from the Waste Reduction and Recycling Incentive Fund may be made as grants to a political subdivision or other entity or organization public, private, or nonprofit when it is found that the proposed program project or study appears to benefit the general public to further the goals of waste reduction or recycling and the statute goes on. I just think that it's important to articulate that there, there are some clear connections here and I do think if we were to move forward there would be some, some relationship under the statute to what is being proposed in this bill. Thank you.

**HILGERS:** Thank you, Senator Bolz. Any other questions? Senator McCollister.

**McCOLLISTER:** Yeah. Your-- in your letter you indicated that this source of funding is the waste disposal fee and the tire recycling. Would you advocate raising those fees to better

enable the fund to handle not only the programs that you described but perhaps the program envisioned by this bill?

**LINDA BEHRNS:** Senator, I believe that if we cap the, the, the fees as they are I think that would probably sustain our programs. It's just that when money has been taken out for other purposes other than those defined in, in the programs that's, that's what has hurt us. Last year our organization lost approximately 40 percent of our budget due to the Legislature pulling money from the DEQ funding for other projects.

**McCOLLISTER:** Thank you.

**HILGERS:** Thank you, Senator McCollister. Other questions? Seeing none, thank you for coming down today. Next opponent. Are there any other opponents? So after-- are there any neutral testifiers? I thought I saw a hand earlier but-- we'll make a call for neutral testifiers after he goes. After that we'll go back to proponents. Go ahead, sir.

**ROGER BEHRNS:** Senators, thank you. I'm Roger Behrns, R-o-g-e-r B-e-h-r-n-s, and I am a board member of Keep Cass County Beautiful and the mayor of Louisville, but I'm speaking solely for myself. The funding we've talked about is on business fees, the three different fees. And if we tap those for other



purposes, even though it can be done, it's permitted, but there-  
- they had an intention when they created them to use these  
business fees for certain purposes. And if we're gonna use them  
for other things, we're making it just another tax on those  
businesses. They're paying, every retail business pays the \$25.  
They expect it to go for the purpose of recycling and waste  
reduction. The tipping fee is the same way; tires you expect it  
to go for tire purposes. Let's not hurt that. That was set up  
for a purpose. Let's keep it that way. So thank you.

**HILGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Behrns. Are there any questions? Seeing  
none, thank you for coming down to testify. Just formally, are  
there anyone wishing to testify in the neutral capacity? Seeing  
none, we will turn now back to proponents. I've-- we've sort of  
slotted about three minutes for Senator Pansing Brooks to close.  
I need about two minutes to read in the letters so about 1:20 is  
when we'll stop again. If you don't have the opportunity to  
testify in person, if you put your name on the white sheet in  
the back, we will accept written testimony make sure your, your  
testimony is part of the record. Welcome.

**MATT GREGORY:** Welcome. Good afternoon. Chair Hilgers, members of  
the Executive Committee, my name is Matt Gregory, M-a-t-t G-r-e-  
g-o-r-y. I'm here today representing Nebraska Wildlife

Federation, a statewide nonprofit organization that also works on clean energy and climate change education. I'm here today in support of LB283 and would like to thank Senator Pansing Brooks for introducing it. I've provided some Wildlife Federation research for you, a one-pager, on eastern red cedars and the climate change forecast for game and fish in Nebraska that we've put together over the last couple of years. So climate change is the defining issue of our time. Not a month goes by without a dire report being issued from everything to the effects on wildlife and ecosystems, the health of low-income communities, the melting of ice on our poles and the subsequent sea level rise that will result, the destabilizing effects on our national security, the added severity to naturally occurring weather events, and the warming of our land, water, and air which will affect the food that we grow and eat. So the time for a plan to adapt and mitigate these already occurring effects is long overdue. And this bill moves Nebraska forward and does not repeat what has already been done. So I sometimes give presentations on the effects of climate change on wildlife and in it I mention trout so I wanted to give you a little snippet of that. If warming temperatures will warm Nebraska's cold water streams which affect the reproduction of rainbow, cutthroat, and brook trout to name a few, and less trout means fewer trout

anglers taking trips that means fewer hotel rooms stayed and fewer meals in local restaurants, fewer equipment sold, fewer stops at gas stations so there's the potential to lose millions of dollars annually in tourism in Nebraska if climate change isn't addressed. We laud the university for their 2014 Climate Change report, the sector-based roundtable report that was followed up. So we believe this is the next logical step for them is to develop the adaptation and mitigation plan that relies on their expertise and experience. So lastly, I just wanted to mention the funding that's, that's been said. We would-- we would prefer that, that, that this plan could be funded without dipping in to the Waste Reduction and Recycling Incentive Fund. Maybe there's other options like increasing the tipping fee or moving some money around at the university and maybe allocating some money from General Funds because it's our hope that the biggest existential threat to the well-being and survival of wildlife and humanity you can find \$250,000 for mitigation and adaptation plan that doesn't take away from existing environmental programs. Thank you.

**HILGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Gregory. Other questions? Seeing none, thank you very much for coming down. Next proponent. Welcome.

**JESSE STARITA:** Welcome. Thank you. Good afternoon, members of the board. Jesse Starita, S-t-a-r-i-t-a, J-e-s-s-e, I'd like to open today by saying that I'm testifying in support of LB283 although on a day like today I could go for a little bit of climate change. I would like to just propose a few rhetorical questions to members of the board. Let's imagine, Senator Hilgers, that you are researching patent law for an upcoming trial. To obtain the best outcome for your client, what might you do? You may start by drawing upon your own firsthand knowledge. If that were insufficient, would you commit to further studying of the issues? I had a question for Senator Hughes. I will not pose that to his chair. Senator Bolz, let's say you're working to reform policies for a socially marginalized population. Where would you look if your own expertise was incomplete? Here's why I pose these hypotheticals. Our state Legislature is diverse but it largely draws this diversity from three professional sectors: legal, financial, and agricultural. To be clear, just because you work in one of these sectors doesn't mean you are unfit to act on climate change. If anything, farmers are and always have been on the front lines of managing weather extremes in Nebraska. But this lack of professional diversity means that our Legislature, by my count, mostly scientific I believe, has 3 senators, 3 of 49 who are

current or past scientists. There are more realtors than scientists in the Legislature. So as a body it's not as though you can simply call on your fellow senators for qualified information on climate change and its impacts to our state which I believe, as other testifies have mentioned, is the defining issue of our time. Instead, you might consider reaching out to a trusted informant, one well equipped to perform such a diagnostic and that just so happens to be a few blocks north. I urge you to let the university do what it does best-- science-- and support passage of this important bill, LB283. Thank you for your time.

**HILGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Starita. Are there questions? Seeing none, thanks for coming down today. Next proponent. We'll get about three more depending on how quickly we go. Welcome.

**ALEX M. HOUCHIN:** Good afternoon, Chair Hilgers, rest of the Executive Board, Senators, legislative staff, fellow citizens, both here and around the state. Stating for the record, my name is Alex M. Houchin, A-l-e-x, middle initial M., Houchin, H-o-u-c-h-i-n, and I live right here in Lincoln within the friendly confines of the "Fightin 28th." I'm going to skip some of my prepared comments. You can read the rest of them if you want in the interest of time. I'd like to share an old proverb: The best

time to plant a tree is 20 years ago. The second best time to plant a tree is right now. LB283 would direct the University of Nebraska to develop an evidence-based and data-driven strategic action plan to provide methods for adapting to and mitigate--mitigating the impact of climate change. Creating a plan for adapting to our changing climate holds special importance to our state's primarily agricultural economy. Nevertheless the first step to solving any problem is analyzing and understanding it because the science is settled. Nearly 100 percent of all climate scientists the world over have reached consensus on three major points. Number one, human activity, especially the overproduction of greenhouse gases, has already begun warming the overall climate of the earth. Number two, if left unchecked runaway climate change threatens all life on Earth with extinction. Number three, the window for taking the kind of swift and decisive action that could avert the worst consequences has little more than a decade and it narrows by the hour. So there's no debate on whether climate change is happening or not. The only debate that matters now is a moral one between action and inaction. You all have the chance today to stop kicking the can down the road. So let's meet this challenge together as a people and not as one party or another. There are no reelections on a dead planet. So please send this

bill to the floor and then to the Governor's desk, twice if you have to. Whatever it takes, get it done as soon as possible because the best time to pass this bill into law was 20 years ago. The second best time is right now. Thank you for your time.

**HILGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Houchin. Are there questions? Seeing none, thank you. Next testifier. Welcome.

**RON TODD-MEYER:** Good afternoon. Chairman Hilgers and members of the Executive Board, my name is Ron Todd-Meyer and I'm here to support LB283. I'm here representing Nebraskans for Peace. The environment and conflict resolution are two of the highest priorities for Nebraskans for Peace because exploitation of our environment is one of the major causes of conflicts in our world. Climate change is already affecting our planet with the displacement of people because they lack access to food and clean water. This has contributed to the conflict in Syria and the migration of people trying to escape hunger and war. The civil war raging in Yemen was instigated in part over water scarcity. Climate change is also a contributing factor to the number of refugees that are on our southern border as conflicts and violence arise in their own countries. And basically all wars are fought over who will control the resources and who profits from them. Fifty years ago I was in the U.S. Marine

Corps in Vietnam. I have continued to question the motives of the decision makers that led to the loss of 2 million Vietnamese and 58,000 American lives. I've also made a trip to Central America and saw the effects of hunger. And now more recently, the U.S. government has spent 18 years in the Middle East creating war trying to control oil production and its distribution. And now we're threatening intervention in Venezuela because Venezuela has oil. These more recent wars are being waged because the U.S. wants to continue to have access to the illusion of cheap fossil fuel economy. The increasing use of fossil fuels has contributed to the rising carbon dioxide levels that are creating this unstable climate and threatens the very existence as we know it. There are some ways, however, that we can with imagination and determination to mitigate some of these damages caused by human-made climate change. I'm a retired farmer. There is a need to restore carbon to our soils to retain water and nutrients. There is a need to relocalize our food system. The food system we, we have today on average travels 2,000 miles before it reaches our dinner plate. Our current food system is unsustainable. We need to change the way we think and we also need to understand that everything and everyone is interconnected. I thank you.



**HILGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Todd-Meyer. Are there questions? Seeing none, thank you for coming down. We probably have time for one more proponent. And if you wished-- you can go ahead. Again if you wish to have your voice heard, we will keep-- we will accept written testimony and if you sign your name on the white sheet. Go ahead.

**BARRIE MARCHANT:** Thank you. My name is Barrie, B-a-r-r-i-e, Marchant, M-a-r-c-h-a-n-t, and I am speaking on behalf of the Lincoln Chapter of Citizens Climate Lobby which is a bipartisan grass-roots group that's dedicated to generating support for national response to global warming. We've talked a bit about the fact that climate scientists are pretty much unanimous agreement. Historically, there's been a lot more disagreement about that on the place of citizens. I was going to give you a list of, I'm sorry, a list of polls that have found there is increasing amounts of support for the belief of climate change. I think the fact that we have had absol-- essentially no citizens here today that have said it isn't true really underscores the fact that people are believing more and more in climate change. Let me quote a little bit though from the 2017 Nebraska rural poll that found that three quarters of rural Nebraskans think global change is happening. Three quarters believe we need to have-- we need to have changes in our

lifestyles to address it. And 60 percent said it's my responsibility to help reduce the impact of global climate change. Less than 15 percent of Nebraskans responded to that poll by saying, I don't believe those three issues. There's been a big change in Nebraska and in the nation in terms of admitting that global warming is true. May I quote from John McCain's farewell letter. He said: Do not despair of our present difficulties but believe always in the promise and greatness of America because nothing is inevitable here. Americans never quit. We never surrender. We never hide from history. We make history. Americans make history when we work together, when we have the information, and when we have the skills to address our needs to address the task. This bill would give Nebraskans the information to make sensible choices in the coming years. Most Nebraskans believe the science and most Nebraskans deserve a fighting chance to protect ourselves, our families, and our states. The 15 percent of Nebraskans who do not believe that we need to do anything should not be allowed to sabotage Nebraska like they have other places, including most recently Houston where a planning commission said, no, we don't need to plan for a while. Thank you.

**HILGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Marchant. Are there questions?

**BARRIE MARCHANT:** [INAUDIBLE] introducing this. Thank you.

**HILGERS:** Seeing none-- ma'am, were you coming to testify? If you-- we'll squeeze you in.

**CARMELO LATTUCA:** Thanks so much.

**HILGERS:** Absolutely. Welcome.

**CARMELO LATTUCA:** Thank you. Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, members of the committee. I want to thank Senator Bolz for noticing. I think she's the one that told the chairman I wanted to testify. My name is Carmelo Lattuca, that is C-a-r-m-e-l-o L-a-t-t-u-c-a. I am a student of UNL and though I do not represent the university, I'm representing myself and that of my friends. But to say how proud I am that there were no deniers of the reasoning of LB28-- LB283 and that shifting the conversation to whether we believe in this and to how we will fund it is something I'm very proud of. I'm sure many of you are aware of the U.N. report from late 2018 about how the consequences will become quite severe in the coming decades if we don't cut emissions by-- cut emissions significantly by 2030. I just want to say that I want the great state of Nebraska to be prepared for what is to come. And I ask that you support this bill. Thank you so much.

**HILGERS:** All right. Thank you very much. Are there any questions? Seeing none, thank you for coming down.

**CARMELO LATTUCA:** Thank you.

**HILGERS:** Senator Pansing Brooks, please close.

**PANSING BROOKS:** Thank you, committee. I'm-- I'm pleased that we had so many people come and speak. As you heard, the opposition was not because they're opposed to a plan. They're opposed to the way we pay for the plan. So, you know, I'm willing to work with and talk to people about what, what to do. I wish they'd called ahead because I would have encouraged them to not come in opposition but to give suggestions in their support because the whole plan is to create a plan. So we're excited. I'm grateful for all the testifiers. They have many good ideas, many experiences, many-- a lot of knowledge here today. Again I want to thank the University of Nebraska for their willingness to be brought along on this because I just added them to this plan really without talking to them. But I felt like their-- they are our resource. They are our knowledge base. They are the ones that can help a plan be created out of science and knowledge and what's going on. They study the soils. They study the water. They study everything that's going on in Nebraska to make our farms better, stronger, more efficient. And who but the

University of Nebraska to, to come along and do this? So again I look-- I dropped this bill on a day talking about economic development because this is an economic development tool as was mentioned earlier. We have got to do something about this plan. We've all seen I-29 closed due to flooding. We've seen I-80 closed. We've seen the airport parking garage in Omaha. We know that we have weather events that need to be planned for as best as possible and that we need, as a state, to have a good and efficient knowledge of what might come and how we might respond to and mitigate any damages. So thank you for your time. I'll work on, on further work on, on how to best pay for it. But again, it does need to be paid for and we need to go forward on this. So and public health, thank you for adding that, Senator Bolz. It is in various places throughout but that's a key line that really it should be added there too. Thank you all.

**HILGERS:** Thank you, Senator Pansing Brooks. Are there questions? Seeing none, thank you for coming down. Before I read the letters in, let me just say to everyone I appreciate your understanding with the circumstances under which we're dealing with, with the HVAC and our limited time. Thank you all for the testifiers who came. Again, one last reminder if you'd like to have your voice heard, please fill your name out on the white sheet and we'll accept the letter and have it in part of the

formal record of this committee for this hearing. Very briefly, I'll read off the letters we received: Alan Moeller from Lincoln; Annica Brown from Lincoln; Bruce and Barbara Johnson from Lincoln; Bryan and Kimberly Hermsen from Lincoln; Carrie Smith from Lincoln; Christie Abdul-Green from the National Association of Social Workers, Nebraska Chapter; David Corbin, Public Health Association of Nebraska; Don Zebolsky, Omaha; Doug and Barb Hellerich; Helen Greer; Jay and Barbara Schmidt from Lincoln; Jean Eden from Lincoln Friends Meeting; Jesse Starita from Lincoln; Julie Diefel from Nebraska Recycling Council; Kathy Jeffers from Omaha; Kenneth Winston from Nebraska Interfaith Power and Light; Kessia Reyne Bennett from Lincoln; Larry Ruth from the South Platte Natural Resources District; Laurel Van Ham from Lincoln; Linda Brown from Lincoln; Lisa Lee from Lincoln; Marjorie Willeke from Lincoln; Mark Loscutoff from Omaha; Mary Pipher from Lincoln; Mary Ruth Stegman from Omaha; Michelle McMahon from Omaha; Mike McMeekin from Omaha by Design; Moni Usasz from Lincoln; Nancy Packard from Lincoln; Rebecca Seth from Lincoln; Renata MacAlpine from Ord; Sharad Seth from Lincoln; Sherry Miller from the League of Women Voters of Nebraska; Stu Luttich from the Wachiska Audubon Society; Tim Fickenscher from Omaha. Those are all in support. Two opponent letters: Nancy Carr from Lincoln and Rick Yoder from Murray.

With that and pending any additional letters we received that will close the hearing on LB283, and that will end our hearing for the day. Thank you very much.