Hearing Date: Thursday February 10, 2022
Committee On: Natural Resources
Introducer: Hilgers
One Liner: Adopt the Lake Development Act and the Water Recreation Enhancement Act

Roll Call Vote - Final Committee Action:
Advanced to General File with amendment(s)

Vote Results:
Aye: 5 Senators Aguilar, Bostelman, Gragert, Hughes, Jacobson
Nay: 0
Absent: 0
Present Not Voting: 3 Senators Cavanaugh, J., Moser, Wayne

Oral Testimony:

Proponents: Representing:
Mike Hilgers Introducer
James Swenson Nebraska Game and Parks Commission
Deb Schilz Ogallala City Council; Lake Mac Advisory Committee
Dale Schroeder Keith County Commissioner
Ken Schilz Nebraska Strategies
Eunice Palu Friends of Knox County
Eric Schroeder NCPPD
Kelly Hanvey Knox County Economic Development
Dan Broz DV Auction, Inc.
Mona Weatherwax Village of Niobrara
Holt Robinette Niobrara Promoters
Traci Jeffrey Norfolk Area Visitors Bureau; Nebraska Travel Association
JoAn Schlotman Ponca Tribe of Nebraska
Margaret Sandoz Niobrara Public Schools
Jonathan Jank Seward County Chamber and Developers Association;
Bruce Bohrer Lincoln Chamber of Commerce

Opponents: Representing:
Al Davis Sierra Club- Nebraska Chapter

Neutral: Representing:
John Hansen Nebraska Farmers Union
Phillip Young Self
Dan Bundy Self
Elizabeth Elliott City of Lincoln
Summary of purpose and/or changes:
LB1023 creates the Lake Development and Water Recreation Enhancement Act based upon recommendations by the S.T.A.R.W.A.R.S. Task force created by LB406 in the 2021 session of the Legislature. The Act directs the Dept. of Natural Resources and the Game and Parks commission to oversee construction and management for certain projects such as (1) A reservoir in between Lincoln and Omaha near Sarpy County, (2) projects at Lake McConaughy, (3) projects in Niobrara State Recreation Area and Lewis and Clark Lake.

On behalf of the state, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Game and Parks Commission will each manage the construction and development of certain aspects of the projects in a way that encourages private donations, investments, and public-private partnerships, donations and investments. Select the land for the lake, applying criterion listed, including preference given to locations that were materially underwater when the Platte River flooded in 2019 where construction will not flood any village or city.

Explanation of amendments:
AM 1914:
1. Adds language to clarify lake project will not be built by damming the Platte River
2. Adds conflict of interest provisions to public-private partnerships
3. Adds provision encouraging engagement of local stakeholders
4. Remove references to "Lake McConaughy State Recreation Area" and replace with "Lake McConaughy"
5. Extends STARWARS committee for oversight to 2026
6. Removes appropriations provisions

Section-by-section description
Sec. 1 Names Sections 1 through 4 as the Jobs and Economic Development Initiative Act (JEDI Act.)
Sec. 2 Legislative findings and declarations; reference to the LB406 study. Discussion of findings from the study completed by the S.T.A.R.W.A.R.S committee pursuant to LB406 in 2021 identified potential opportunity for a reservoir on 3,600 surface acres of floodway near the Platte River in or near Sarpy County without a dam on the river or negative impact on the city of Ashland, the surrounding communities or the economic development of the same.
Sec. 3 Grants the Department of Natural Resources all power necessary to carry out the purposes of the Act. Enumerates the authority and limitations; allows creation of Lake Development District.
Sec. 4 Prohibits annexing of any land within the Lake Development District.
Sec. 5 Names sections 5 to 7 the Water Recreation Enhancement Act.
Sec. 6 Legislative findings and declarations related to the Act.
Sec. 7 Outlines the purpose of the Water Recreation Enhancement Act, the projects, and power granted to Game and Parks Commission; authority to enter into public-private partnerships.
Sec. 8 Extends S.T.A.R.W.A.R.S. committee termination date to December 31, 2026.
Sec. 9 Repeals and replaces original section 50-802.
Sec. 10 Emergency clause

Bruce Bostelman, Chairperson