

March 8, 1979

LB 119

SENATOR KELLY: Mr. Chairman, members of the Nebraska Unicameral Legislature, I rise to support the Lamb amendment as amended by Senator Koch's amendment which will mandate a public hearing when one of our public power entities decides to cancel out the construction or the building of an electric generation facility. This is very appropriate and it will plug a hole in our planning procedures on placing generation facilities for electric power in Nebraska. It has been up until this LB 119 will pass, that you had to get permission from the Power Review Board to build a facility but then when you decided not to build it, you had the ability with impunity to just not build it. Now how can you have meaningful planning if you just have the ability not to follow the plan? This amendment, the Lamb amendment, will put the power industry on notice, that they will not be able to, in the secret of their board meeting, cancel out the whole planning process of the public power industry. They will have to do it in public and the public will know about it through the mandated public hearing that is in this by Senator Lamb and by Senator Koch and I wholeheartedly with everything I can support this amendment and its wisdom will be proved many times over as we start to move on to the real expensive construction of electric power production. The ratepayer of Nebraska is getting a break. Support this amendment and 119.

SENATOR NICHOL: Senator Fowler, did you wish to speak to this amendment?

SENATOR FOWLER: I would rise to support the amendment and also I guess I would like to, since the issue has been raised, defend the Omaha Public Power District Board in their integrity although I am not in their service area. I think this amendment would be good because I think a public hearing, a public explanation of cancellation would in fact be very valuable and I think that the Board of the Omaha Public Power District should have the opportunity to justify and explain their decision and I think that that decision would very much stand the light of day for the ratepayers of Nebraska, not just for the ratepayers of their district. It is unfortunate that the ratepayers will have to pay \$36,000,000 for the cancellation but I think that \$36,000,000 is small when compared to the cost of the plant which would have been \$2,000,000,000. I think probably the mistake was made when the Power Review Board chose to approve that power plant which it turns out to have been unnecessary and I think that having the Omaha Public Power District come back or whatever power district