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LB 457

are some things that this board, if it had the public before it, questions asked by them that we would understand and they would come out and it probably would be one of the best things that ever happened. So I am going to support this, not because I think they are going to lower fuel, Senator Schmit, not because they are going to lower coal, not because they are going to lower coal rates, nothing like that. We simply are going to let the people know and maybe, just maybe, if the people would have had their say, we wouldn't have had that \$35 and \$20 is \$55 million bonds against the State of Nebraska. These are bonds against our state. We wouldn't have had them. We wouldn't have \$5 million going back to that Three Mile deal. That is the reason I support it. Thank you.

SENATOR NICHOL PRESIDING

SENATOR NICHOL: Senator Lamb.

SENATOR LAMB: Well, here we go again, another consumer bill, so-called consumer bill that really...it really reacts to the detriment of the consumer because this requires the power districts to spend more money and so instead of reducing the rates we have the situation where the rates may very well be increased. I don't know what the cost is to send out the notices but I do know that we already have an open meeting law in the State of Nebraska, public meetings by public bodies are open to the public, and it seems to me that the public interest is already protected through that law and that this is just another expense that the power districts, the power industry, will have to absorb in the state and you know where that money comes from. It comes from the ratepayer.

SENATOR NICHOL: Senator Hoagland.

SENATOR HOAGLAND: I would like to rise in support of this matter, Mr. Chairman and colleagues. I think this bill is really nothing more than an open meetings bill. Now let me explain why I say that. There really isn't any decision that a public power district is going to make that is going to be more important to its constituents and more important to the citizenry in its particular district than the decision to raise rates. Now all this bill does is it stiffens up the open meetings bill with respect to this one decision. This one decision to raise rates is really more important than any other decision that these bodies make. Now with respect to the argument that it is going to increase costs because notices have to go out. Now the Omaha Public Power District