

some cases it is not only adequate but quite well maintained, in others it is not. But what we find in the course of the last 20 years is this trend in the United States and in Nebraska for expenditures as a percentage of gross product revenue to decrease, the trend was upward for expenditures per capita but infrastructure expenses represented a smaller share of output in government revenues and personal income. While more is being spent per person, in other words, the infrastructure investment represents a lower budgetary priority in Nebraska and in the nation and, of course, in the last 20 years. Well, think about it, in the last 20 years the demand for social services has picked up. The welfare state, if you will, has not been curbed and we have spent our money on people. Well and just. Education, well and just, certainly with a great need... a great element of demand and that's been a sensible thing to do. Constituents, by the way, as we all know as politicians, turn out for the library. They turn out for different human services and recreation programs and the like. What the citizenship does not turn out for at hearings are new sewers. They're not there for updating their electricity system or their natural gas distribution system. They're not there for the infrastructure costs, they are there for the other social services kinds of expenditures. And what's happened, that chart tells us, according to our Department of Economic Development, is that we have had a lowering of infrastructure as a budgetary priority in this state and that reflects the national trend. Capital outlays, like total expenditures, for infrastructure are receiving a smaller share of resources and, therefore, represent a lower budgetary priority in Nebraska, concludes the report. Not only that, but Nebraska has invested less heavily than the national average for sanitation, sewage, airports, and water supply and water cleanliness than has the rest of the country but has invested greater than the national average in highways. Certainly, our roads needs are very great. Certainly, that represents why we have a high amount of commitment to roads. But I would suggest to you that the existence of a permanent funding mechanism has also justified why we have spent money for roads above the national average. We have a segregated financing system for road expenditures and that is the one area of infrastructure that this state has done above average, to its credit. The MRF bill, 683, attempts to take infrastructure issues and build up somewhat of a wall around them and to learn the lesson of the roads expenditures and that high commitment we have to infrastructure there and carry that theme over to the very unsexy business of keeping and maintaining good sewage