

generated around the state. I, frankly, admit I was astounded the day of the hearing, the Friends of the Museum, down here in Lincoln, took an interest in this project, in fact came out this summer and met with the local promoters of the project. And since that time, as the word has spread around the state, I have received unsolicited letters from people, and we had unsolicited groups show up at the hearing, including the Nature Conservancy, Lincoln PTA, Lincoln Gem and Mineral, Friends of the Museum, Federation of Women's Clubs, Junior Federation of Women's Clubs, Omaha Junior League, Lincoln Junior League, National Audubon Society, the Nebraska Association of Earth Science, University of Nebraska State Museum, various chambers of commerce and historical societies and county commissioners and tourism boards specifically in western Nebraska. I've got a letter from a city administrator here in South Sioux City that talks about how important he thinks that might be to pick up traffic down Highway 20 for the purposes of tourism development. It seems to be one of those rare projects that the citizens have captured the imagination of other citizens who have stood up and said, this...

PRESIDENT: One minute.

SENATOR SCOFIELD: ...is really something special I didn't realize Nebraska had. This other map that I just gave you now shows you what our fossil wealth looks like in Nebraska and there is a proposed fossil treasures trail. So I think this has major long-term benefits to the State of Nebraska. Nebraska doesn't have to be a pass-through state, even though the Department of Tourism has frequently said that's really all we can settle for. I don't buy that. We've got special things in this state, and this is a project that I think gives us an opportunity to develop that. So I would ask you to go ahead and help us get the planning underway for this. And I would invite everybody out here to see the region. If you haven't been there, I know I'm biased, but it is special. So I think it's unequalled, not only by our neighboring states, but probably by anything any place else in the world. I would ask your support. Thank you.

PRESIDENT: Thank you. Senator Weihing, please, followed by Senator Dierks.

SENATOR WEIHING: Mr. President and members of the Legislature, I rise to support this. Senator Scofield, could I ask you a