

With all of this, we are finding some particular environmental hazards costing schools a great deal of money and in looking at the options of how to meet the cost involved, the schools are interested in having the ability to issue bonds to pay for these costs. Now LB 706, in a general sense, addresses this and LB 562 had more specific language needed by the public schools in the state. So this amendment would incorporate that language. They would change a date that we have regarding when a public hearing has to be held on this topic, the schools have been having trouble with that date. It does require that school boards designate the environmental hazards involved for whatever tax levy, which is now currently under the statute as applied to. See there is a separate tax levy now allowed for our schools that we have had for some time so we could identify and clearly for the budget and the public what is going into asbestos removal and that will also be for environmental hazard abatement. The tax levy would go from 3.5 to 5.2 cents because of this increased cost of asbestos removal and that would be included in the amendment. There would also be an additional yearly requirement to, by the Commissioner of Education, to report on this problem and finally again clarifying the school district authority to issue bonds to pay for these projects. We very much need this bill. We appreciate the Speaker putting it on the agenda because of this crisis that we are facing in our schools. I did pass out an article from the Lincoln paper about our problems and so with that I would ask for the adoption of the amendment and be happy to answer questions about it if there are any.

PRESIDENT: Senator Hall, please, followed by Senator Hefner.

SENATOR HALL: Thank you, Mr. President, and members. The Wesely amendment is to LB 706 which is a bill, as he stated, I brought before the Banking and Insurance Committee, deals with changing the authority for NIFA with regard to allowing for hazardous abatement projects to be funded for schools. In other words, it expanded their lending authority so that schools could use the low interest loans that NIFA offers for the permanent abatement of hazardous materials. Asbestos fell in that category but there were a number of other areas that it would provide for specifically one of the issues that we talked about yesterday, the underground storage tank issue is a problem for many school districts who in the past have had to store their own petroleum products or other liquid hazardous materials underground. So the bill, itself, is a bill that had little or