

and oil field workers and the Oil and Gas Commission, a compromise was reached on the bill and consensus was gained as represented by the committee amendments. The original bill had some misdemeanor language and didn't have a waiting period before the civil penalty could be assessed by the Oil and Gas Commission and so the committee amendments are the thing we need to talk about. The Oil and Gas Commission is charged with the enforcement of environmental protection rules and regulations in the oil field production and maintenance. They currently can issue citations and penalties or citations or things of that type, but in order to levy a civil penalty must go through judicial process with the county attorneys and such as that, and these ongoing violations in the oil fields continue. Many county attorneys in small counties are reluctant to assess fines or penalties on oil producing companies with large local payrolls and investments and they drag their feet, and the environment continues to be polluted out in these oil fields. Red Willow County has the largest oil field producer in the state in Sleepy Hollow Oil Field. It has been a large oil producer for many, many years. There are areas out in there, in that big oil field, where salt water has been dumped illegally, where oil has been poured out into pits and things of that type that has rendered farmland unusable. It looks almost like a war zone. The Oil and Gas Commission through the EPA and the DEC do need to be able to assess some fines and penalties on these people who are polluting our environment in the oil fields and this would allow the Oil and Gas Commission to issue a citation with a proposed penalty to an individual who is violating the rules and regulations as to illegal discharge or dumping of oil field waste. The Oil and Gas Commission would issue a citation and a proposed penalty by certified mail or personal service on the individuals who are violating the rules and regulations. Those individuals would then have ten days to clean up their act, so to speak, if it was possible. Thereafter, the Oil and Gas Commission could levy fines of a civil nature, it is not criminal, no misdemeanors involved, until the violation is stopped. Then if the individuals who were so penalized or fined did not pay their fine, they could go to the county attorney, go through the legal system, and get a judgment on those individuals to satisfy the penalty. If the individuals who are involved after they had received their citation questioned it, they have a thirty day period in which to request a hearing before the Oil and Gas Commission, and the hearing has to be conducted in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act that governs all of the agencies when they have hearings on