

ago or so in this state when we didn't start planning for what appeared to be a fairly obvious outcome. I'm going to try to offset, avoid that same kind of eventual difficulty in the state with air service. And that is the main purpose of this bill, is to get us to plan for better air service in this state before we really face a crisis situation. The lack of air service, I'm convinced, in this state has a negative impact on the economy, has a negative impact on access to tourism. And you have on your desk as well, I believe, a second handout that points out the need for strong cross-state connections, as recommended by the Nebraska Futures Group. This is an idea that seems to have sprung up independently from a number of quarters. When I started thinking about it, discovered that South Dakota was working on it, then discovered that New Futures was also recommending that we need to create the best intrastate air service in the Great Plains. And that was just reported out in their report, you have the Omaha World-Herald article of February 25th recommending that. That's the basic purpose and the basic philosophy behind the bill. Now, let me tell you what the bill does. It puts...it suggests that we try to put together a plan that might eventually lead to a public-private partnership to enhance intrastate air service in the state. We create an air authority, which is made up of seven members appointed by the Governor. And the reason for putting an authority in place right now is I don't want this to just be another study. We have to have an active and involved group of citizens championing this idea to make it go. There is enough interest out there, I'm convinced, from such groups as New Futures and the interest that some of you have exhibited here on the floor that I think we can put together a group that will champion this and keep it going. And it really is going to need somebody to carry it through and make it happen, otherwise we will end up with just another authority. As the amendments indicated earlier, this authority is independent of the Department of Aeronautics. And the Department of Aeronautics really becomes the pass-through agency. We do have some expertise over there that will be useful to us, but they have plenty to do on their own. So we need to go ahead and create this authority and give them the power to initiate this study. They have quite broad powers at this point under this bill, from making reports and recommendations to the Legislature concerning the provision of services and facilities. They can come in with a whole range of recommendations, all the way from planning to financing. We do ask for a report to be generated by December 1 of 1990. Probably the most important outcome of this, in