

addition to creating the authority, would be asking that authority to explore the feasibility of this concept, come up with recommendations for a funding mechanism and plans for the development of an intrastate commercial airline. We did, at the hearing, have George Poulos appear on behalf of this bill, who, as you know, manages GP Express and is currently involved with the activities going on in South Dakota. I believe with help of individuals like him, who are involved in the airline industry already, we can do a very good job of planning, but it will require outside consulting expertise, and that's what the cost of the A bill will essentially reflect when we get that. I have deliberately kept that A bill low at this point, because I think we can build on what South Dakota has already learned and tap into our own excellent research capabilities here in Nebraska and make this go. But we need to do a market and needs analysis of existing air service and possible alternatives to that service to link major communities together in this state. That...my goal would be to link as many of the major communities together as possible. New Futures suggested that perhaps it might be wise to have something like a 60 mile driving distance to any airport hub. So, at that point, that's how the particular communities that were identified by New Futures were designed, but that's all up to the study. And I think we need to determine what the boarding rates might be, what the feasibility of it is. South Dakota essentially put together a package of combined federal funds, state funds, boarding fees, tickets if you will, generating the rates and figured out how to put that package together. They're about two years ahead of us in terms of this development. So I think we can profit from their experience and decide, number one, does this make sense for Nebraska? I believe when we start looking at this we'll decide it does, in fact, make sense for Nebraska. But the complexity of providing air service requires some very careful study and some...it's not a thing that you just take off with one day and decide to do. It will ultimately probably demand that we sink some state resources in it. I don't envision that within the next few years, until we have completed this study. But I think it's important that we start this planning process right now. Every year, as we talk to all of our mayors and so forth, it's a battle in Washington to hang onto essential air service. I would hope that that would continue and that we will continue to succeed. We need that to make this work, that's an essential component of it. But the opportunities for expanding this, the opportunity for expanding business and tourism activities in the state, and I would suggest even to address