

simply rise to urge you to go on record with the rest of us to encourage the Interstate Commerce Commission to examine this issue, to encourage the Chicago-Northwestern to bargain in good faith with interested buyers. I have a group of railroaders out in Chadron that organized called Western Horizons who have some interest in purchasing this line. We have been contacted by other private buyers from around the country that may be interested in buying the line that tell us that it could be a viable line, but in order for it to be a profit making line, it first has to have a meaningful offering as Senator Lamb indicated. If the only thing that is offered is that segment from east of Chadron to west of Norfolk...

SPEAKER BARRETT: One minute.

SENATOR SCOFIELD: ...there really isn't an opportunity there to, in my opinion, make that a profitable line and at a minimum that has to connect up with the Burlington Northern line through Crawford, Nebraska. Ideally, we would be able to acquire the piece of line clear up to Colony, Wyoming. Interestingly enough, in the midst of what we thought were negotiations going on, my folks out in Chadron learned about in November that there had already been an option given to the DM & E on that piece of the line from Hermosa, South Dakota, to Colony which is a critical piece in terms of maintaining the bentonite. So I would urge you to go on record with us today, encourage our congressional delegation to continue their good work on this, encouraging the Chicago-Northwestern to negotiate in good faith in those groups that are, in fact, legitimately interested buyers and that could possibly make this a meaningful line but we simply cannot accept either the option of abandonment or the loss of service until some other arrangement has been made, so I ask your support for the resolution. Thank you.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Senator Peterson, further discussion on the resolution, followed by Senator Dierks.

SENATOR PETERSON: Mr. Speaker and members, I, too, rise and ask for your support in this resolution. I think it is one of the more important resolutions that we've had for some time in regards to hopefully saving this line some way or another. I do know, and I don't know what more can be said than what Senator Lamb and Senator Scofield have said, but there is an interest by different groups in wanting to purchase this line and I think Chicago-Northwestern at this point is being a little negative in