

SPEAKER BAACK: Thank you, Senator Nelson. Now we'll go to Senator Beutler.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Mr. Speaker and members of the Legislature, I just wanted to make a couple more remarks on this particular bill, this time not looking at the bill as a local...on the merits of the bill as a local proposition but arguing to you this time that really this kind of thing is a matter where there should not only be significant, if not controlling local input, but there should be very significant input from the state level. And my reasoning is basically this. There are certain kinds of things in this state that although they are geographically located in a particular area, are unique esthetically, recreationally in any one of a number of ways and Nebraskans generally identify with them and it's important that they be preserved for all Nebraskans and that all Nebraskans have a part in the decision on those matters. And I would point out to you such things as Chimney Rock, and Fort Robinson, and some of the other things that we have done in this state that we have worked on at the state level that are important to all Nebraskans. If somebody suggested to you that you take a bulldozer and push off the top of Chimney Rock and put a communications tower on the top of it, because that's what the county official out there wanted to do, you would say, that's crazy. And you would say that because of the uniqueness of the phenomena. And I think that there are also some stretches of rivers in this state that are equally important in the long-term history of this state, equally important to people in Omaha, people in Lincoln and people at the local level should not have the right, in my opinion, on those kinds of matters to have the sole voice as to what happens, as to what the future of those particular characteristics, our rivers, our unique phenomena should be. And I would like to point out to you that the people of the state feel the same way about it. In every poll that's been taken, the people of the state have supported, for example, the Niobrara project overwhelmingly and even when asked as to the control of the particular project sixty...two-thirds of the people were in favor of either control at the state level or federal level. Not even 25 percent of the people were in support of local control. The people themselves identify some of these matters as matters that are important to everybody and they should not be controlled solely at the local level. Most states...in most states that have laws relating to scenic rivers and there are thirty some of them now, the control, the lead