

and, in fact, it may not be necessary to have an appropriation of anywhere near that magnitude. The appropriation bill that would now accompany 783 calls for an appropriation of \$1,260, if you adopt the amendment that we have submitted for it. So this has gone from a \$20 million project to a \$1,260 project, as far as the State of Nebraska is concerned. Now I want to make clear to the body that that reduction to \$1,260 is dependent upon negotiations which are now ongoing with the C&NW Railroad. If we are successful, as I hope we are, in those negotiations, that \$1,260 is a real number. If the negotiations do not turn out quite as I hope they may, we may be required to come back to the body on Select File and ask for additional funds. However, at this point in the legislative and in the negotiation process, it is necessary that I ask you to move 783 forward, even though we may have to come back to you on Select File with specifics and even a request for more money. Senator Kristensen raised one concern on Friday that I want to address briefly. That was the concern that if we adopt this bill, or adopt the proposals in this bill, that we are asking all the railroads to simply dump whatever they don't want on the State of Nebraska. That isn't the approach that is set out in the bill. If you read the bill carefully, we have a council that would analyze any proposals, make sure that they are economically viable and only support an alternative to abandonment if it made sense. Now these things can make sense. If you have a so-called short line operator, branch line operator, or whatever you want to call them, they do make sense for those smaller organizations. They can be run economically, primarily because smaller organizations have a greater operations flexibility. They may have more flexibility in marketing. They may have more flexibility in other areas than the large railroads that are currently operating.

SPEAKER BAACK: One minute.

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: So there is no intent to produce a mechanism for the railroads to dump all their problems on the State of Nebraska or to anyone else; simply sets forth the tools for the states to look at each problem on a case-by-case basis and make a decision, and to be of assistance in resolving problems when these lines are going to be abandoned. Thank you.

SPEAKER BAACK: Thank you, Senator Wickersham. Before we go to the next speaker, I would like to introduce some guests of Senator Haberman. They are under the north balcony and they are six students from the Future Homemakers of America Class from