

Chase County High School from Imperial, and their teacher. Would you folks please stand and be welcomed by the Legislature. Thanks for being with us. Next speaker, Senator Lamb.

SENATOR LAMB: Thank you, Mr. President and members. I would just like to pick up on one or two things, and Senator Wickersham has circulated this fact sheet which is on your desk, and down there under number six is the economic impacts of abandonment. And we do have this analysis. This is rather a thick little booklet that is available to any of you who might be interested and the title of it is "The Preliminary Analysis of the Chicago-Northwestern Nebraska Rail Line and the Impacts of Abandonment," the impacts of abandonment, and Senator Wickersham has detailed some of those in this handout, and the negative impact of the highway is tremendous if this rail line is abandoned, according to this study. This is a study we commissioned last year and it is a fairly comprehensive study that you may be interested in viewing. But he has summarized there on this sheet some of those negative impacts, and a \$67 million increase in highway maintenance and rehabilitation costs if this railroad line is abandoned. You put all that grain and fertilizer and other products on the highway, you don't get by for free. It costs money to maintain the railroad...or the highway. And then a \$26 million decrease in producers' income, primarily farmers' income, due to the increased costs of transporting farm products. The bottom line is that it costs more to ship that grain by truck than it does my rail, and so that is a negative impact on the economy of this state; \$16 million decrease in the income of residents of counties served by the line due to reduced expenditures by producers, less economic activity if this line is abandoned. Then there is another small item, that assuming that the highways are not going to be kept in as good as shape as they are now, there will be a negative impact on your automobile, everybody's automobile and trucks. So this is what we are talking about. The negative impacts of abandoning this line on the State of Nebraska are tremendous. So the bill now, as it stands, does not have any funding in it, has \$1,280, which I don't think is enough even for this commission to operate. I think we ought to have a little bit more than that, Scotty, but, nevertheless, the \$10 million has been taken out of the bill. It is somewhat of a paper tiger at this point. I hope that by the time it passes on Final Reading, there will be either some money in there or some signed contracts which do give the bill some force, some teeth. So I would just hope that you would