

vote to advance the bill and we will go from there.

SPEAKER BAACK: Thank you, Senator Lamb. Senator Kristensen.

SENATOR KRISTENSEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, members of the body. Senator Wickersham and Senator Lamb have again today discussed the merits of the bill and there are a tremendous amount of benefits that this bill can do for that rail line and the impact in that area. And I don't necessarily rise in strong opposition at this point because we took out the funding mechanism that would take \$20 million out of the Highway Trust Fund to do that with. Some of the things I raised last Friday are concerns that I think as a policy matter the State of Nebraska needs to look at and to do. I think Senator Lamb and Senator Wickersham have pointed out where they are at. At this point, the negotiations are going on and I think the state ought to allow those negotiations to go on, and we should do things that will not get in the way and hinder that. And so from that point of view, I think it is probably apparent that the bill will move along today at some point in time, but there are some things that need to be done before this bill, I think, gets passed into law or before we decide to sink any money into it, and that are some policy questions that we are really going to have to do. If the railroad can't make any money and they are going to abandon it, what makes Nebraska think they are going to be able to run it any better, and are we committing a lot of money or our times and efforts to do that as well ourselves, policy question number one? Policy question number two is that I think that it is probably going to be up to the local people to come up with a funding mechanism to help do this, and in their fervor to do that, in their fervor to save this line, there is going to be local tax monies, perhaps, there to guarantee any bonds that might occur. There may be local people's money that they are going to put up as collateral if they are going to have some sort of indebtedness that they are going to have to incur to buy the line and to renovate it. Ultimately, what that does is place a burden back on us. It is a risk that we are going to have to take because the state can't be in the railroad business. That is not our purpose. We leave that to the railroads to do, just as we are not in the trucking business but we want to facilitate those sorts of things. So what Senator Wickersham and Senator Lamb are doing have a good policy and purpose but there's also involved some policy changes for the State of Nebraska and some potential risks. One of the things that I think we need to do as well, and this will be the