

CLERK: Mr. President, Senator Wehrbein would move to indefinitely postpone LB 714. Senator Beutler would have the option to take the bill up, or defer for a day.

SPEAKER BAACK: Senator Beutler.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Take it up, please.

SPEAKER BAACK: He has elected to take it up. Senator Wehrbein, on your motion to indefinitely postpone.

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: Yes, Mr. President and members. I move to indefinitely postpone the bill. My position on this is that it's not necessary to spend the money at this time. I want to be clear on this, and I'll say more on this as time goes along. I'm not necessarily opposed to the need for recreation or trails in some areas. My principal opposition to this is two-fold. One is the amount of money committed by the state over, in this case a 10-year period or more, perhaps. The \$100,000, it's not proper at this time in my mind to start a new program. So money is one issue. The second issue, this proposal has really come to the forefront for one reason, because of an issue running from Lancaster County east into Cass County, which admittedly is my district. It's a railroad track to be abandoned, and I understand that this money would probably be used partly in support of this particular project. My position on this is that railroads were created 120 to 125 years, 30 years ago in this, well, actually back in the 1850s in this part of Nebraska. They were designed to provide public transportation, and rightly so. It had nothing to do with proposed recreational trails. So the first premise is that they were not designed for this purpose. They were a public utility unit at that time. If rails were needed in Nebraska at that time, that's fine, and I have no problem with that. But to automatically assume that they should become a trail, a recreational trail, I think is a far jump. Just because that land is available is doesn't necessarily make it in the proper spot or the proper location. This is not necessarily a scenic area at all. In fact, as I read over much of this material that Senator Beutler passed out, there are many truly scenic areas that are being used across the country, and I consider that probably a proper use. That's their decision, not mine. But this is not necessarily a scenic area, it is simply good farmland. The owners would much prefer that it would return to farmland. Admittedly, they have had an option of purchasing, or an opportunity to purchase, and they've lost the