

tremendous amount of support, not only from the county governments, but from the actual shippers. There is a lot of interest from the shippers. They are willing to do their share to provide funding for this railroad. They are the ones who will end up owning it and being the operators, and I think that the whole process has been really rewarding for us, when we have been around talking with these people. The whole district from Norfolk to Chadron stands to gain tremendously in the way of economic development, and I think it is very urgent for our citizens that this amendment and the bill be adopted. I'd urge your support. Thank you.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Dierks. Senator Kristensen.

SENATOR KRISTENSEN: Thank you, Madam President, members of the body. Senator Wickersham, could I ask you some questions about the amendment, and I think it is important that we understand. In the past, I've stood up and talked about the need for a statewide funding mechanism because this won't be probably the only line that is in trouble, and so we have to look for, is this not just an isolated situation where we are trying to save one rail line in one area, but for some state purposes. In your discussion, Senator Wickersham, you talked about liabilities. I assume what you are really talking about is how can we shelter the state from liability on the line, if there is accidents, neglect, negligence, those sorts of liabilities, maybe floods, for example, that would occur. That would be not a negligent act on our behalf but it would be a liability. So I assume what you are proposing to do is set up this railroad council and let them be the holders of the liability, is that the basic intent?

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: That is correct. The intent is to set it out there like a corporation you'd use in the normal course of business, and you have to fund a corporation with a certain amount of capital, but that is all that you put at risk.

SENATOR KRISTENSEN: Okay.

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: You may have at risk what you put in there, but nothing more.

SENATOR KRISTENSEN: I guess with...that's what the dilemma I am in because I am pretty sympathetic with what you and Senator Lamb are trying to do with the rail line, but I also get a little goosey when it comes to the liability of the state here