

does not want to go out of business, it's been no secret that the Chicago Northwestern has wanted to go out of business and has not been user friendly for some time. You just talk to any of the shippers along that line and they will tell you that. And so what we're saying now is that we are giving them a chance, we are doing what I think the state should do and what the states have done in many cases in other parts of the country is to make an effort to save a railroad. And, as was mentioned previously, it's not just the Chicago Northwestern, it could be a railroad in your district at some point in time. So, with that, I would just ask that Senator Beutler's amendment be rejected and that the bill be advanced.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Lamb. Senator Wickersham.

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: Thank you, Madam President. Just briefly again to respond to Senator Kristensen's concerns. I think the way we're talking about structuring this transaction removes any question in my mind anyway that the scenario or the set of circumstances that he is describing will arise. The line, as it currently stands, has a salvage value of about \$7.9 million. If we're able to acquire it for \$5 million, there is \$2.9 million to be laid on the table for someone. I think if we lease that line to a corporation that's going to operate it and we say that in X number of years you can buy it for \$5 million, that they will not walk away from the excess value, that \$2.9 million. They will not leave that on the table. If we put in the \$5 million, we will get our \$5 million back but we will never get the railroad line back. I also don't share Senator Kristensen's concern because I know that if they come back to this Legislature for money, we will have to go through Senator Moore and the Appropriations Committee and I think it will be a very tough row to hoe. I, for one, do not intend that this piece of legislation or this particular project become a long-term subsidy operation by the State of Nebraska. I think it's worth the deal that we're proposing but it is not worth a future commitment by the State of Nebraska to a long-term subsidization of this line. And so I do not share Senator Kristensen's concerns, but I do urge you to reject Senator Beutler's amendment. I think the State of Nebraska will get a more than adequate return from the \$110 million economic benefits that we will realize if we simply invest \$5 million.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Wickersham. Senator Conway.