

concerning the line from Norfolk to Chadron and attempt, in that manner, to still acquire the line for the price that had been agreed to. There may be additional...the additional requirements were that we have some sort of access from Chadron to Crawford. All of the indications are that the C&NW will now attempt to abandon a segment of that line from Dakota Junction to Crawford and that will have to be opposed. Again, I think we will be in a much stronger position to oppose that abandonment if we have LB 783 passed and if we have 783A passed to provide funding for the agreement that had, in my opinion anyway, been reached in the Governor's office on May the 2First. So that, I think, is the importance of the two bills to the abandonment process. It simply strengthens our hand in the...in the negotiations. And if that's an adequate response to that, once again, I think that it is not necessary perhaps to have an extended debate on this bill. I think that by now everyone is familiar with the issue and, of course, the issue is whether we're willing, at this time, to invest \$5 million to save the state future costs in terms of maintenance, road maintenance, lost income for producers, lost jobs, lost property taxes, et cetera, those costs totaling well over \$110 million over a 25-year period. In addition, I think there is one other element that we did not discuss before and I was somewhat remiss in bringing it and that is if we do not save this line, we will lose a part of our future. We lose a part of our transportation infrastructure. That transportation infrastructure will not be replaced if this line is abandoned and destroyed or torn up. We will lose, through that process, a part of our future.

PRESIDENT MOUL: One minute.

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: We will lose options that are unknown to us at the present time. We will lose opportunities that we cannot even now imagine. It will have impacts that are absolutely unknowable. And, with that, I simply would urge that we now on this second effort pass LB 783A.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Wickersham. The speaking order is Senator Chambers, Wickersham, Pirsch and Moore. Senator Chambers.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Madam President and members of the Legislature, I would like to ask Senator Wickersham a question or two. Senator Wickersham, the \$5 million would be for the purpose of purchasing the line from Norfolk to Chadron.