

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Moore. Before we proceed with debate, I would like to direct the senators attention to the south balcony. Special guests of the Legislature today are representatives of a tour group for retired persons from the Ralston-Omaha area. Would you please rise and be recognized. Welcome to the Legislative Chambers. Thank you. The speaking order now is Senator Wickersham, Chambers, Kristensen, and Morrissey. Senator Wickersham.

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: Thank you, Madam President, members. I've been interested, of course, in the comments of Senator Kristensen and Senator Moore when they described their fears that \$5 million is not all this bill is going to cost the state. I would suggest to you that if we do not pass this bill and the accompanying A bill that, indeed, we will not be talking about \$5 million, we'll be talking more like \$110 million that it will cost the state. What I'm suggesting, in pure and simple terms, is that we can be penny wise and pound foolish with this legislation if we choose to do so. But I do not think that is a sound course. You have heard two senators suggest that they cannot see into the future and they cannot tell whether or not some future body would heed the pleas of some future persons in unseen events. Those are potentialities, unknowns, ephemeral arguments. We had a study commissioned and done, which no one has challenged or refuted, indicating that to close this line will cost \$110 million in discounted dollars over the next 25 years. Sixty-seven million dollars of those will be spent on the highways, on the highways alone. Twenty-seven million dollars will be represented by lost income to producers, because they will not have an economical means of shipping produce. Sixteen million dollars will be lost to people who rely on the shippers and the producers for their income. Jobs will be lost because elevators will be closed. In fact, one elevator has already been closed pending the outcome of this legislation. Property tax dollars will be lost to the local political subdivisions. Last year they collected over \$225,000 in property tax from the rail line alone. If the elevators also fail, we do not know how much that will cost the local political subdivisions, but it will be significant. In addition, if the line closes I suggest to you that we will have lost a part of the future for the communities and the counties along that line. They will have lost the potential for all kinds of economic development and activity that we cannot foresee and cannot tell how much it will cost us to lose. If you want to talk about unknowns, Senators Moore and Kristensen, I would suggest that