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Department of Roads if this bill is passed, or will it be more expensive and more time consuming for the Department of Roads if we pass the bill?

SENATOR KRISTENSEN: Senator Schmit, a valid question, this is going to make it a lot more efficient for the State Department of Roads. Otherwise, they are going to, in some areas, if you'd ever want to widen that shoulder, do anything like that, because it is in that wetlands area, you may never be able to do those projects. You may have to go through an extensive litigation. Right now they are going to face a lawsuit. Currently, there are some people who are objecting to that. It would be much more expensive if we don't pass this. It would be more efficient and we would face projects that would not be built in the State of Nebraska but for the ability to mitigate some of the wetlands.

SENATOR SCHMIT: Is the Department of Roads in a situation today where any wetland does not come under the jurisdiction of the federal statute and has to be protected, or has the federal government and the corps abdicated their responsibility for some of the wetlands in Nebraska?

SENATOR KRISTENSEN: Senator Schmit, I don't know the specific answer to that. It is my understanding that the federal government has control of all those wetlands in the permit area with the Army Corp of Engineers.

SENATOR SCHMIT: But what you are saying is that if we pass this bill that the state does not need to go through the corps of engineers, for example, south of Columbus, where they are building a four-lane highway, and they are now in the process of replacing substantial amounts of wetlands?

SENATOR KRISTENSEN: No, no, Senator Schmit, they still have to go through the Army Corp. We can't get around the federal government's requirement that we go to the Army Corp of Engineers, but this would allow us the ability to comply with mitigating those or replacing the wetlands, so if you placed a fill at the side of that road, you would have to have a wetland restored somewhere else. This would just give the Department of Roads the authority or the ability to place that wetland somewhere else, and, usually under the federal law, it is going to have to be similar wetlands, so you can't stick them from one end of the state to the other.