

February 10, 1992 LB 307

explain the bill before you go to that, or...

SENATOR WILL: No, it's probably appropriate just to go straight to the amendment.

CLERK: Mr. President, Senator Will would move to amend his bill. The amendment is on page 468 of the Journal. (See AM2464.)

SPEAKER BAACK: Senator Will.

SENATOR WILL: Mr. Speaker, members of the body, LB 307 is a bill that addresses what has become a longstanding dispute between People's Natural Gas and the Metropolitan Utilities District in the Omaha area. Essentially, I'll give you a little background. The reason we go to the amendment is because the amendment becomes the bill actually, and the amendment has been agreed to by all parties involved. Frankly, up until about a month ago, if anyone had told me I'd be introducing an amendment that had been agreed to by all the parties involved, I would have told them they were crazy. But it actually has, through negotiation process, come to a point where we pretty well have an understanding between People's Natural Gas and the Metropolitan Utilities District. By way of a little background, the Metropolitan Utilities District is a public body, it's a subdivision of government, it serves the City of Omaha, it serves their gas...natural gas and water needs. And People's Natural Gas is a private entity, it's investor owned, it's a utility that serves large areas in Sarpy County and some other areas of Nebraska. And there's been an ongoing dispute between the two, essentially over the boundaries of the Metropolitan Utilities District. From People's Natural Gas point of view, MUD has boundaries that are guaranteed, they're guaranteed a franchise within the city limits of the City of Omaha, and they are also able to go outside the city and obtain other property, other communities in order to serve. The People's point of view has been that MUD has become very aggressive in their expansion over the last few years, they have tried to impose absolute boundaries, legislatively. From the MUD point of view, People's has come in with legislation that they feel threatens their very existence, that they think there's an agenda out there whereby People's would like to privatize MUD and the MUD service area. So, essentially, because of the very different nature of the two entities, they've been butting heads. I introduced LB 307 to serve as a catalyst for resolution of 'his conflict.