

occur through the DED. You also indicated that \$250,000 would be a great start, how much do you anticipate is actually needed to meet the concerns out in the rural areas?

SENATOR VRTISKA: Well I don't think I'm in a position at this time to answer that directly. I think that probably if this in fact as a pilot situation is successful, certainly there would be an effort and should be an effort to maybe increase those funds because economic development is certainly an important element of Nebraska's economy and I would hope that we would be able to do everything we could to encourage more job creation and more help for particularly rural area, but not necessarily all together.

SENATOR MAURSTAD: Thank you, Senator Vrtiska. I've got some concerns with LB 144. I certainly wouldn't argue against any of the general principles that are outlying, but obviously they are extremely broad...

SPEAKER WITHEM: One minute.

SENATOR MAURSTAD: ...and all the success of this program will certainly depend upon the rules and regulations that are developed by DED. It doesn't appear to me that there is anything in the bill that would guarantee that these funds go to rural areas. There are a number of programs that are already available that those that are not in the rural areas are able to access and have been accessing and so I think that this bill, if it's going to move forward, needs to really concentrate on what I think is its main provision and that's to strengthen the rural communities and as such, this bill should provide the protection to do so. Finally, I'm concerned about DED's involvement in this. DED has already got a great deal of work to do and at times many would think that are already spread too thin so I hate to provide them with additional responsibility that they, that might curtail activities that they are already a part of.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Thank you, Senator Maurstad. Senator Robinson, followed Senator Wesely and Senator Maurstad.

SENATOR ROBINSON: Mr. President, members of the body, Senator Vrtiska, I have a couple of questions.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Senator Vrtiska.