

February 21, 1995 LB 830

cities or others authorized under the bill to make this determination. They will determine whether the project will be approved. So as far as this initial declaration is concerned, the language that I'm offering would require that the board determine that the application is in the public interest, meaning that it serves the best interests of the public or the common good to have this area declared blighted and substandard. Nebraska is deemed to be an agricultural state, but each year, as I have predicted, Senator Schrock, from the first day that I was here and discussed farm issues, the number of farms is diminishing, the number of farmers is diminishing, the number of people who work in farm related activities is diminishing. Now you may have a situation where the same amount of land will be taken up with agricultural activities, but you're going to have larger and larger farms controlled by fewer and fewer people. So, Nebraska will be declared to be an agricultural state. It may not be in the best interest of the public to have a substantial area of agricultural land declared to be substandard and blighted. The board, with this amendment, is allowed to consider other elements of this bill in arriving at a determination of whether the public interest will be served. Right now they are not required to even make a determination that such a declaration will carry out the ultimate purposes of this bill. When the entity that is going to approve the project application, on the other hand, is reaching its decision there are specific things it must consider before it can grant approval of the project. So I'm hoping that you will adopt this amendment which simply indicates that the board which is basically a rubber stamp, even with the amendment that was adopted this morning, will make a determination that declaring this territory blighted and substandard will find that to be an advancement of the public interest. I had discussed this with Senator Withem and at that time he didn't see a problem with it but sometimes there can be discussions with other people and he may have some questions he wants to put to me on the matter, but if anybody else has questions, I'm prepared to answer them.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Thank you, Senator. Mr. Clerk, an announcement.

CLERK: Madam President, Senator Wickersham would like to have Retirement Committee meet underneath the north balcony, south balcony I should say now, Retirement Committee underneath the south balcony.