

program, we need to, at least at this point, fund it at \$3 million. One of the reasons why retail is not included is under the federal standards of the Community Development Block Grant program, they have targeted low income people and the jobs that would address the needs of low income to try to provide them with a living wage. And so the CDBG program doesn't qualify retailers, and so this is to dovetail with that and the other tools that the Department of Economic Development and the various economic development groups have around the state to assist them in the final piece of the puzzle. Many times the critical part of either bringing a new business to our state, and I will give an example of that in a minute, or assisting existing industry to expand, the example that I want to use is the last project in Beatrice, bringing the ACCUMA Corporation to the State of Nebraska. We were in competition with three other states. Turned out one of the very important needs of ACCUMA was a rail spur. The site that they had located in the Economic Development Park in Gage County didn't have a rail spur to it. The current rules under the CDBG program didn't allow for block grant dollars to be used for a rail spur. So the community of Beatrice, fortunately, had adopted the Beatrice Economic Development Plan, as provided for under LB 840 of the Legislature a few years ago, and so there were funds available to the community of Beatrice that are not available to any other community in the State of Nebraska, and they were able to use those funds for the rail spur, and, ultimately, landed ACCUMA that provides an additional, initial \$8 million of investment into our community with the total over a ten year period of in excess of \$25 million in the accompanying jobs. So this is what this is trying to tie into. It is trying to find and be able to provide that last piece of a puzzle. That's why it is at the discretion of the Governor and the council to provide them with the latitude and the flexibility to provide dollars in those areas where, as we all recognize, competition is stiff and can be the deciding factor in bringing a new small business to the communities in the State of Nebraska, and I emphasize all the communities in the state, not just Lincoln and Omaha. Thank you, Madam President.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Thank you, Senator Maurstad. Senator Bernard-Stevens.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Senator Maurstad, would you yield to a question?