

to be maintained. Thank you very much.

SENATOR CROSBY: Thank you, Senator Vrtiska. Senators, I might remind you the noise level on the floor is again a little high, so the speaker may not be heard. So if you could just relax a little. Senator Beutler.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Madam Speaker, members of the Legislature, let me try to articulate why what's being asked of you right now is patently unfair. If you adopt the Coordsen amendment, then you're going to go back to the rule that this is a railroad and the railroad has to pay 100 percent of the fencing. What is this? This is an abandoned railroad. Nobody...the Game and Parks didn't cause it to be abandoned, it was abandoned by the railroads, it was before the ICC. One of two things could happen, it could become a trail and a park for all the people, or it could become private property. If it became private property, the rule would have been 50-50 on the fences. Okay? So why should it be different? The rule for Game and Parks land is 50-50, it's one of those two things now, it's not a railroad. And I guess what disturbs me about this is that I see recreational trails as a very neat little economic development tool for a lot of rural areas. It's not going to change everything, but it's going to make a difference in the Valentine area, it's going to make a difference up in Chadron, in that area. There are going to be a lot of people going out there spending money. And what are we doing? We're trying to make it more expensive to do that economic development in a way that is unfair. I mean it's one thing to say that the landowner should have the rights that he always had, and I agree. If you don't like this proposition, which I accepted as something I thought was a novel and good idea, if you don't like that, fine, we'll go back to 50-50. But that's not what this amendment does. If this amendment is adopted, it takes us all the way back to 100 percent of it being paid by Game and Parks, or whoever is operating the recreational trail, and that's just not fair. If there had never been a recreational trail, it would have gone back into private hands, and the rule would have been 50-50 on each side. There's no reason that it should be different in this situation where we're trying to benefit all of the people of the state, including most especially the people in the rural area. Yes, landowners along the way feel badly. I don't blame them. But there's a greater good in the rural areas, there's a greater good for the state as whole. And it's patently unfair