

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office

February 22, 2000 LB 717

CLERK: LB 717 by Senator Preister. (Read title.) The bill was introduced on January 20 of last year, referred to the Government Committee, advanced to General File. I do have committee amendment. (AM2003, Legislative Journal page 675.)

SENATOR CROSBY: Thank you. Senator Preister, to open on LB 717.

SENATOR PREISTER: Thank you, Honorable President, friends all. I rise as the primary introducer of LB 717 this morning. I introduced it last year and it proposed a fee system to help fund the activities of the State Emergency Response Commission, otherwise known as the SERC, and the Local Emergency Planning Committees, otherwise known as LEPCs. After a considerable amount of work during the interim with a working group, I'm bringing essentially a redraft of that bill to you today for consideration. The redraft will be in the form of the committee amendment that Senator Schimek will be discussing. That amendment was filed in the Journal some weeks ago and has been available to the public for review. In addition, we mailed copies of the amendment to over 150 members of the working group that we have been meeting with throughout the interim. A second public hearing, as reflected in the committee statement, was also conducted with no one opposing it at that time. To give you a little bit of history, in 1986 Congress enacted SARA Title III, better known as the Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know Act. This federal act required each state to appoint a State Emergency Response Commission, SERC, and to establish Local Emergency Planning Committees, LEPCs, throughout the state. The purpose of the act and these groups is to conduct planning for response to hazardous chemical spills and releases, and to inform the public about the presence of hazardous chemicals in their communities. In 1995, I established a Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know working group. This working group has met since 1995 through interim studies and ongoing meetings to implement the provisions of the federal, then state act. Nebraska carried out its EPCRKA responsibilities under executive orders from 1987 until 1997, when LB 374 was enacted, putting the act into state law. LB 374 included language which allows the SERC and the LEPCs to accept gifts, bequeaths, and other donations, and establishes a state