

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

March 7, 2000

LB 1092

out. And I'd like to know if some have expressed an interest in jumping through all these hoops that I think they're going to have to jump through.

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: Senator Robak.

SENATOR ROBAK: Thank you. Senator Wehrbein, I can't answer your question how many. You asked how many...you didn't ask how many producers, did you? You asked how many custom plants. My bill does pertain to producers but it's more the...to the plants, but the medium...small to medium size producers are the ones that's interested in this type of program, so that's what we're addressing here. We...if you know the bill is strictly voluntary. They don't have to be state inspected. They can stay the way they are. But with a state inspection program they will be able to, as I said, sell their goods, their produce locally to the stores and across state lines, interstate, and Congress is ready to pass that. Why...and Minnesota did jump on the bandwagon there so that we would be behind the curve there. So it's the producers that we're looking out for. We don't want the small farmers to go under. And that's also why we pushed the time table back, so that Department of Agriculture would have time to evaluate this just to see how many are, would be interested, and it is a pilot program.

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: If I can ask another question. Do I have some time left? This, in a way, is a study and I could justify it that way. I was wondering, is there any way to...what if you came up a year from now and they said, this is a great idea but practically speaking there's very few people interested? Because it's kind of interesting to me you said producers, but the locker plants are the ones that are going to have their neck stuck out, so to speak, meeting all of these standards, and I assume that the cost of inspection is not going to be comfortable to some producers when they find out what it's going to cost to have a federally...or state inspected meat system, if they're not going to pay for it themselves. But is there any effort in your bill to pull back a year from now if it...if initial investigation would show that it's not feasible?

SENATOR ROBAK: Well, of course, if the Department of Agriculture did find it not feasible then, of course, the pilot