

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

March 9, 2000

LB 171

meeting a federal mandate. I was reminded afterwards that there is one program, although I don't think it fits the fact pattern that we have for the TV broadcasters, and that is a...there is a sales tax rebate program that applies to pollution abatement projects. Some of those pollution abatement projects would be the result of a federal mandate, some of them would not. That program was put in place, I believe, in the sixties or seventies, when there were aggressive federal efforts to control pollution. The primary industry that was affected by those efforts was, of course, the power industry, and the power industry has received sales tax breaks as they have...in particular, as they have implemented pollution control efforts. And again, other industries have as well used that exception, but some of that is the result of federal mandates, some of that is not the result of federal mandates, it was simply an incentive, probably one of the early incentives that the Legislature passed to do a particular kind of activity. The other difficulty with the position, I believe, that Senator Kristensen presents is that it desires to give a break to the industry, but it does not give a break to the other person's that are going to be affected, and those other persons, of course, are you and I, the consumers, who will either have to buy a digital television so we can in fact receive and fully utilize the digital signal, or we will have to buy a box that we will attach to our television and it will convert the digital signal into an analogue signal and then we'd be able to watch television, because we'll have to bear those costs if we want to continue to watch television after the conversion is over. There will be no analogue signal in a few years. And either you will buy a new television, or you will buy a box to put on top of your television, so that you can watch, or beside, or wherever you wish to put it. But you're going to bear an expense. There is no sales tax break for you, nor is it I think really possible to construct a sales tax break for you. The other difficulty, of course, with Senator Kristensen's argument is that, if you bear the cost, there is no way to pass it along. Senator Kristensen asserts that there is no way for the industry to pass along the cost of this conversion. But if the whole industry is converting, then the...it seems to me that the industry in Nebraska is at no particular disadvantage, either on a national basis or a state basis...