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LB 1000, 1234

would be delayed and would not take effect until July 1st, 2001. The mission of the Niobrara River Council requires the Game and Parks Commission to provide up to \$50,000 for administrative support when requested to do so by the council, requires that any activity proposed by any state or local agency within the corridor be consistent with the purpose of the scenic river designation, and a detailed plan of such activity must be presented to the council for its approval. It also requires council approval for subdivision, plots, or layouts of property and building lots if the real property is located within the corridor, unless the property is within the municipal corridor. Then only the municipality would need to approve. Sections 13 through 20 of AM3324 are the provisions of LB 1000, which was advanced unanimously by the Natural Resources Committee. This bill allows the Department of Environmental Quality to issue emergency grant money to municipalities for wastewater treatment facilities that have been damaged or destroyed by natural disaster or other unanticipated actions or circumstances. And the reason we need this is, they have the authority now to give money...to give grants and loans to counties, but they don't have authority to do it to municipalities. That's probably the major portion of this bill. Under current law, only counties are eligible for these funds. Another section increases the cap from \$300,000 to \$500,000 for loans to municipalities with populations of 800 or less. These loans may be up to one-half the cost of the wastewater treatment programs. These monies in the Wastewater Facilities Assistance Act come from the Department of Environmental Quality administrative cash fund. This fund is generated by fees on loans, so it is a revolving cash fund, and that portion of it has no A bill. I hope that explains it quite well. I believe the Niobrara River Council is important, because if we do not do this, we have the possibility of the federal government taking over the program, and there will be no local input. This is a rather innovative program. I commend Senator Beutler for bringing it to the committee. He's worked long and hard on it. And without this, we have the possibility of the scenic river being managed by the federal government, with no local input. And we believe we have an understanding with the federal government that if we pass this legislation, they will work with the state of Nebraska, work with the local people up there, and we think it will bring a lot more harmony to that region. That would conclude my opening