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FLOOR DEBATE

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portfolio, and to invest in more renewable energy projects. Now is not the time to cut off our options in terms of exploratory funding. I'll give a little bit of information about the steering committee itself. It was established without funding, initially. And this bill does not provide any funding. You'll notice the fiscal note is zero. There is no funding that was originally provided, and there currently will be no additional funding. However, the committee as it has worked has applied for and did receive two grants, one to help to deal with the administrative costs, and the other one will be able to do some assessment, and that will be \$30,000 that will start the process for the development of a Nebraska bioenergy road map, which could lead to significant new funding for these activities. The bill was advanced from committee on a vote of eight yeases and no noes. There were proponents, myself and the Nebraska Municipal Power Pool, a member of whom does sit on the Biopower Steering Committee. There were no opponents, and there was no neutral testimony. It has a makeup of appointed members that serve on it, and currently they have been serving as volunteers and not even reimbursed for any of their expenses. We would continue that. We would not be paying any expenses. This would just allow them to see if they can do some things in the rural community to help to provide for some opportunities in rural Nebraska. With that, I conclude my opening and would encourage advancement of the bill. Thank you.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Preister. You've heard the opening on advancement of LB 692. Open for discussion on that motion. Senator Stuhr.

SENATOR STUHR: Thank you, Mr. President and members of the body. I just stand in support of Senator Preister's bill. I think this does give an opportunity by extending this committee for two more years to have an opportunity to explore further ventures in this area. Thank you.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Stuhr. Further discussion on the advancement of LB 692, offered by Senator Preister? Seeing no lights on, Senator Preister, did you wish to close? He waives the opportunity to close on advancement. The question before the body is, shall LB 692 advance to E & R Initial? All