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FLOOR DEBATE

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facilities. But that bringing somebody in from the outside to do it doesn't necessarily mean that it's going to be done better, that they, too, aren't going to have problems and that perhaps keeping things internal and doing things here in Nebraska could be a good option. It's my understanding that NPPD didn't really consider any other companies other than NMC. I don't know from what I understand that they have contacted even OPPD, which could have some factors of joint operations and that may have been in earlier discussions, but I don't know if that was ever a serious consideration. So there was a list of, I believe, six options that the board members had to consider. This was just one of the options and the indemnification in this option is the one that I think is of some concern to us and that we shouldn't view lightly. But I think that raises the issue that in the last decade the Nuclear Regulatory Commission has effectively had its budget cut every year, and so as we have more aging nuclear reactors we also have reduced budgets in terms of inspections and inspectors and oversight of these aging nuclear reactors. So at a time when...

PRESIDENT HEINEMAN: One minute.

SENATOR PREISTER: ...they are likely to have more problems, we're seeing reduced budgets of oversight. That should certainly be of concern to people living in the immediate area, but anyone who is in any close proximity to these plants. I take this issue pretty seriously. I appreciate the fact that Senator Beutler was willing to look into it more closely as well. And I'm not sure about General File, but at least on Select File, we will likely have an amendment to tighten the issue and have some limitations on what the actual indemnification does entail, and what things shouldn't be included, and also include the nonprofit aspect to this so that another concern that I have that we're not just opening this up to one step down the road of privatizing our public power. That, too, remains a concern of mine, and...

PRESIDENT HEINEMAN: Time has expired.

SENATOR PREISTER: ...thank you.