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SENATOR CUDABACK: Senator Landis, you're recognized to open on the fifth component of the divided committee amendments to LB 608.

SENATOR LANDIS: Thank you, Senator Cudaback, members of the Legislature. This is what you would call the rural tier. We have three levels of LB 775, \$20 million of investment, no new jobs; \$3 million of investment and 30 new jobs; \$10 million of investment and 100 jobs. Do I have that right? I think I do. Now this has to do with that second tier, that is the \$3 million and 30 jobs. What our Department of Economic Development told us in public hearing was that the application of LB 775 to rural communities most often tripped up on the 30 employees standard; that the projects that were appropriate projects that could be lured to rural Nebraska were projects that had fewer than 30 votes, (laugh) 30 votes, 30 employees. So the idea that came to us, and it was in the Governor's bill, was to do it for \$2 million of investment and 20 jobs. What the...and then 100,000 people in the county or less. The committee did this. The committee said, all right, a rural tier makes sense but 100,000 people is not a rural county, not in this state. Sarpy County is not a rural county. Grand Island is not a rural county. A rural county is different than that. So we're going to use a different threshold and we picked a threshold of 20,000 inhabitants in the county or less that constitutes a rural tier. Understand that there are, I believe, 59 counties that have used LB 775, and so there are projects in a wide number of counties. But if there are some counties that have been left behind because they're sparsely populated and they are rural, then we should reflect that, so the number is 20,000 inhabitants. Secondly, there was an area of agreement with the Governor's bill and that was to go to 20 jobs, so this does have 20 jobs in it. What is a distinction, a second distinction with the Governor's original proposal was the Governor wanted to lower the amount of investment for these kinds of projects. This bill 17 years ago had \$3 million in it. If you were to do today the value of the contribution that was made when this bill was first passed, that number would not be \$3 million, it would \$4.8 blank, blank, blank, blank, blank million. In other words, it's gone up by over half in its, you know, its value of today.