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FLOOR DEBATE

May 1, 2003

LB 74, 305

SENATOR CUDABACK: Senator Hudkins, return for a specific amendment, you're recognized to open.

SENATOR HUDKINS: Thank you, Mr. President. The amendment, FA1303, is actually the bill number LB 74. This has to do with boating noise. The bill was advanced by the Natural Resources Committee 7 to 0, with 1 person not voting. The reason that this bill came about was that the current levels concerning motorboat noise just say that the exhaust of an internal combustion engine used on any motorboat shall be effectively muffled by equipment so constructed and used as to muffle the noise of the exhaust in a reasonable manner. Well, the problem was no one knew what "effectively muffled" meant. They didn't know what a "reasonable manner" was. So as you can see, the language was very broad and very vague. Because of complaints from individuals living along bodies of water, the Missouri River, the Platte River and various lakes, there was concern that some of the...and the airboats were the ones that started it...that these boats were so noisy that there should be some effective specific number that could be used to say these boats are too loud. We worked with both the opponents and the proponents. And at the hearing, the Nebraska Sierra Club spoke in favor. The airboat association did as well, and also Herb Angell from the Game and Parks Commission, and also a resident from one of the lake areas. There was no opposition to the bill. And there was neutral testimony from the Nebraska Council of Sportsmen's Clubs. What we have done is put the bill into an amendment form now to LB 305, giving specific levels of loudness, which would be at a 96 decibel level. Before, we had no specific number. It was just whatever was reasonable. Well, now what is loud? How loud is loud? Well, at 20 decibels, that is considered very faint, and that would be watch ticking, or if you were whispering to someone else. Thirty to forty is considered faint, and that's quiet conversation or a private office. Forty-five to sixty is moderate, and that is normal conversation. At the hearing, I did have a dosimeter, which measures noise levels, and the level varied in the hearing from 60 to 70 decibels. Loud is 70 to 80, and that can be a city street noise. Very loud is above 90. That could be a car horn at five meters away. A sustained noise above 90 decibels can cause hearing damage. And if you're over 110 decibels, that