

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office
FLOOR DEBATE

May 28, 2003

LB 48, 92

Chambers. Senator Connealy, on the Schimek amendment to the Chambers amendment.

SENATOR CONNEALY: Thank you, Mr. President and members. Maybe to comment a little bit on Senator Quandahl's objections or questions on this. We introduced LB 92 early in January. January 9 it was read the first time, and the premise of LB 92 was to make it so that the Rural Development Commission could change its structure, could be the entity that would allow us to have a viable entity to represent us to the federal government. We took the funding away last year and this was the way for this entity that has done great work for the state of Nebraska and for rural development, since its institution, could continue to have that relationship. So the idea that we have something new here at the end of the session is not true. We made a mistake, I would say, in saying that this was going to be changed so that it would fit within what at least I believe the Governor's intentions were when he had it in his budget recommendations and when we had early discussions with the Governor after introduction of the bill. The Rural Development Commission has had an ongoing relationship with the federal government and we need to protect that. It's had an ongoing relationship representing Nebraska in rural economic development with the federal government since 1992. And once again, they've done great work. There is a difference in philosophy. I have no problem with traditional economic development. The traditional way to attract big businesses or develop an ethanol plant or those kind of traditional things that the Department of Economic does and does very well. I don't want to say anything negative about that kind of approach. I think it's been in my district. It's been all over the state and performed well. There is a broader question, though. Is that the total picture? Do we want to put all our eggs in that basket? In the nineties, we decided, as a state, that there was another part of economic development that wasn't traditional. It was getting more people involved. It was bringing more people to the table. It was smaller. It was more innovative. And that's what the Rural Development Commission has done. Once again, I said that they developed the Nebraska Community Development Foundation. It's a fantastic story, and there are those foundations in all of your districts where there is now \$64 million held together in