

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

March 19, 2004 LB 917

when we talked about the bill, that there's nearly 2 million acres of forest in municipal areas in Nebraska. So this is...the Forest Service helps with in rural and also in your metropolitan areas and your small towns and villages. We have forest people out there in different parts of the state that will help with shelter belts. They'll advise you on the tree trimming. They can help with grants to work over shelter belts that need to be rejuvenated. And this all comes through the Nebraska Forest Service. We have an industry out there in northwest Nebraska now, in the Pine Ridge area, of forestry; logs and lumber that are being shipped out to South Dakota on the local rail line. This is an industry that's developed over the years and through the Nebraska Forest Service they've went into these areas, along with the National Forest Service, and picked out the trees that need to be culled out for people that own the land there. And it makes quite a difference in...especially in some of these years when there was a stressful economic incident going on in that area. So I surely hope that we can all support this bill, advance it along, and this is something that is a must-do situation I believe. Thank you.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Loudon. Senator Preister, on the advancement of LB 917.

SENATOR PREISTER: Thank you, Honorable President, members of the body. So far it seems we've been doing fire suppression. I think I'm going to throw a little fire onto the table. Here we have another opportunity. This is almost a million dollars. Like many of the other tough choices, if we want to do this and provide for the Forest Service, then we're going to have to make some priorities and determine what other things we may not want to do as we get all of these budget items out before us. This is a big ticket item. It's a lot of money. It was taken out of the budget through the university actions and now we're essentially going on one hand cutting the university budget and they cutting this budget and now we're putting it back. It's not directly going to the university but it's putting some money back to the university to provide for the Forestry Service. It's another tough decision. The public in areas wants to have this funding. They want to have the vehicles out there to do