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February 24, 2005 LB 71

SENATOR CUDABACK: Senator Kremer, to open on AM0569 to the committee amendments.

SENATOR KREMER: Thank you and, members of the body, I just stated what this committee...this amendment does. We inadvertently left off the \$1 million, so this puts that back in, and it's the intent that \$1 million be appropriated for the purpose of the act for three consecutive years. So that puts this back in, which was not intended to be left off the committee amendments. Thank you.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Kremer. You've heard the opening on the amendment to the committee amendments to LB 71. We're now open for discussion. Senator Hudkins, followed by Senators Chambers, Stuhr, Connealy, and Senator Don Pederson, Senator Stuthman. Senator Hudkins.

SENATOR HUDKINS: Thank you, Mr. President, members of the body. I will be supporting this bill and its amendments. If you were listening when Senator Stuhr gave her introductory remarks, I would like to expand on that just a little bit. One of the purposes of this bill is to enhance the opportunities for small businesses. These businesses can be in agriculture in the rural communities, and it would also encourage partnerships, networks, and cooperative efforts for promotion of value-added activities. This is an agricultural state and we're always looking for ways to enhance the income of our rural neighbors. One of the items that I was particularly interested in, it was on your blue sheet that was handed out, has to do with grapes and wine. The Nebraska Winery and Grape Growers Association received an award of \$28,000. I'm especially interested in this because I have a vineyard in my district, James Arthur Vineyard near Raymond. These funds will be used for purposes of marketing, promotion, research, and education. Just ten years ago, Nebraska did not have any wineries. Five years ago there were only 3, and now there are 12 in production and 4 or 5 or 6 more on the drawing board. There are also, at this time, over 300 acres of grapes in cultivation. Back before World War II there were many, many more acres of grapes, but due to a series of circumstances, those grapes were plowed under and that land was used for other crops. But I will be supporting this because, if you look at