

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

April 4, 2005 LB 82, 351

CLERK: 28 ayes, 0 nays, Mr. President, on the advancement of LB 82.

SENATOR CUDABACK: LB 82 does advance. Mr. Clerk, LB 351.

CLERK: LB 351, Mr. President, by Senator Preister. (Read title.) Bill was introduced on January 11, referred to the Natural Resources Committee. Bill was advanced to General File. I do have committee amendments, Mr. President. (AM0794, Legislative Journal page 853.)

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Senator Preister, to open on LB 351.

SENATOR PREISTER: Thank you, honorable President, friends all. LB 351 makes a few minor changes to the current membership of the Environmental Quality Council, otherwise known as the EQC. It adds two new members: a public health/environmental health specialist, and a biologist. It also exchanges the public at-large member for a representative of minority or low-income persons. The EQC would grow from a 16-member committee to an 18-member committee. The EQC is the regulation making body for the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality, or the NDEQ. It is a 16-member council that has been in existence since the early 1970s. Each member is appointed by the Governor, confirmed by the Legislature, and represents a special interest. A term on the EQC is for a period of four years. The council meets four times a year and the members are paid a per diem for the days that they meet. The council reviews and approves regulations for all the programs administered by the Department of Environmental Quality. The purpose of this bill, LB 351, is to add members to the council that bring not only a health and science background, but refocuses the member of the public representative to include an EQC member from an underrepresented members of the population--low-income and minority citizens. A September 30, 2004, Lincoln Journal Star article reported that the estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau indicate that from 2000 through 2003 the state's total population increased about 1.5 percent, but minorities grew 10.1 percent. The white population grew just .3 percent during that same time period. The Hispanic population increased 12.2 percent, and increased in