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FLOOR DEBATE

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as follows: The authority and duties of the counties under the act are permissive under the committee bills...committee amendments. They more narrowly and objectively define the purpose of the bill as preventing uncontrolled expansion of prairie dog colonies to neighboring property. They revise the duties of agriculture...the Department of Agriculture to largely an advisory role. The authorities of the animal control...Animal Damage Control Fund, to be utilized toward specific objectives, such as prairie dog management, and there are technical and clarifying amendments to enforce these mechanisms. A little bit of the details: The primary change is the authorities of the prairie dog management become permissive authorities and may be...and may, let me emphasize that, be assumed by counties that apply only to land within counties that opted to exercise that authority. The original bill imposed prairie dog management responsibilities upon any county where prairie dogs were present. Now it's just on the counties that have this management plan. Section 3 of the amendment authorizes counties to adopt a prairie dog management plan consistent with the regulations of the Department of Agriculture. The county which adopts a plan assumes authority that are set out in the remaining part of the bill. The authority that's responsible to the counties, in Section 5 of the amendment, specifically lists those authorities that may be utilized. They can employ personnel. They can cooperate with federal, state, and local governments. They can issue general and individual notices. They can examine property. They can request and receive state aid from the Animal Damage Control Fund. Other authorities in the act that the counties may assume was included in Section 8, the right to enter and perform activities authorized by the act; in Section 7 (sic), establish a county black-tailed prairie dog management fund. Under the amendment, the Department of Agriculture, as I said, become mostly advisory. And Section 9 assigns duties and authorities to the department to develop expertise in prairie dog management; Section 10 they are...they can convene an advisory committee with membership consisting of state and federal land management agencies, the Institute of Ag and Natural Resources, and other organizations with expertise on prairie dog and land management. Section 11 adopts regulations to guide counties in implementing the authorities made available under the bill, and