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FLOOR DEBATE

April 12, 2005 LB 673

the western end of the state out here. At the present time, you don't have a management or a prairie dog problem in Lancaster, Douglas County or some of the neighboring counties, but I do know there are prairie dogs in this area and if they're not a problem then they don't have to be managed and the counties don't have to adopt a plan. But they are in areas that have rather complete devastation. I just call...got a call from a lady out in Harrison that said the other day they had a fire call and they went out north of Harrison because they thought they had a prairie fire and it was a prairie dog town. The dirt was blowing on the prairie dog town so it looked like it was a fire. And if any of you ever lived out in the country in places like that, I can attest to that. Whether it's alkali lakes that are bare or whether it's a prairie dog town that's bare, these are something that needs to be managed. It isn't any different than your deer or your wildlife. At the present time, there's hunting season on deer and that uses a management tool. Nobody seems to be concerned of that. There's quite a revenue attached to it. It just so happens nobody eats prairie dogs and they're not able to be managed. We have gopher problems. There's management plans that it isn't necessarily county ones, but gophers are handled in the same...in the same manner, only on gophers they usually try some complete eradication in areas that they're not wanted. That's done in areas where I live, usually down in the meadow land or something like that or an alfalfa patch. The gophers usually have the hills and the people have the valleys, is the way it's being worked. This LB 673, of course, with the committee amendment onto it, has changed the outlook of it. We worked with NACO, the county officials organization, to come up with a plan that they were more comfortable with so that the counties didn't think they would have to put out a lot of money to implement this thing. The idea is to try and implement it without a huge cost to counties or state, for that matter. It's up to the landowners and, of course, on managing and working with prairie dogs, this is usually a labor-intensive project and usually there's a lot of folks who will get a few people together and they go out and do what they can if the prairie dogs are so moved into an area that they're not wanted. With that, I still would ask for the acceptance of AM1007 to the AM0867. Thank you, Mr. President.