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FLOOR DEBATE

April 12, 2005      LB 673

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Louden. (Visitors introduced.) On with discussion of the Louden amendment. Senator Stuthman, followed by Senator Schimek.

SENATOR STUTHMAN: Thank you, Mr. President, members of the body. I would like to engage in a little bit of a conversation with the introducer, Senator Louden, if he would be willing to discuss a few items that I have a concern with, please.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Senator Louden, would you yield?

SENATOR LOUDEN: Yes.

SENATOR STUTHMAN: Senator Louden, were these prairie dogs in the area, you know, many, many years ago, or were they, in your area, introduced into that area by the Game and Parks at one time?

SENATOR LOUDEN: No, I...they weren't introduced. This is on...a lot of it is on federal land up around the Harrison area and, as far as I know, there have always been some prairie dogs there all the time and they usually cohabitate with people until they get...the last few years when there was such a drought and then they got overpopulated and the ecosystem couldn't take care of them anymore. So consequently, they've increased to where they're a problem now. And it is...there is concern that the valuation of the land will have to be lowered on these, where these colonies are.

SENATOR STUTHMAN: And how many prairie dogs would there be in a colony, or how many would you be talking about, or how much area would they be encompassing what we're talking about as far as a management area?

SENATOR LOUDEN: Well, as...it depends on the size of the colonies. For instance, like the Oglala Grasslands they talk about, and that's probably where the only place is an accurate measurement, is there's about a little over 2,000 acres of just prairie dogs on that...on that area. Some of the other places the federal people have measured it off quite closely. On federal lands, there's probably around 30,000 acres of prairie