

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

April 20, 2005 LB 673

and agriculture. The intent of the bill is to allow counties with prairie dog overpopulation to be able to exercise control of any encroachment onto adjacent property if they are not wanted. I believe that the bill is reasonable and consistent with existing Nebraska policies for dealing with problem wildlife. Individuals have the responsibility to take care of problems on their property. And if they do not, the local government may address the problem and charge the landowners for the cost. The bill does not require landowners or counties to eradicate prairie dogs. Several amendments have been adopted during the General File debate--one that I offered, and several that Senator Beutler has offered. I believe that these amendments have improved the bill. I think it is in good shape to be advanced to Select File. And if there are suggestions for amendments to be offered on Select File, I'm ready to work with interested senators to do so.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Louden. Senator Kremer, as Chairman of the Ag Committee, would you like to give a recap of the Ag Committee amendments to LB 673?

SENATOR KREMER: Okay. Thank you, Mr. President and members of the body. I think Senator Louden really did...was referring mostly to the committee amendments. The bill as originally started was that the counties had to do this. And it comes now to just free and permissive, probably at the urging of some landowners to be...have them come in and be a partner in writing some ways to control the prairie dogs in cooperation with the Forest Service and the Department of Agriculture. In the committee amendments, the Department of Agriculture really becomes more of an advisory group, rather than being directly involved. It's just permissive. There probably wouldn't be a lot of counties that do it. But if it became a problem, they would. And it simply asks the counties to write a management program of how they can control that. I think maybe Senator Louden did not mention the two amendments that we have adopted--Senator Beutler's amendments that would give a 48-hour notice before anyone would come on the property of the landowner to investigate what the situation was; and also, if a landowner where the prairie dogs were moving onto did not object, then there would be no plan to do anything. And it's really a