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LB 748

maybe the same or not any greater anyway, but long term, when you allow, you know, one--the Metropolitan Utility District--to be the supplier of the natural gas, I think in time to come rates are going to be a lot higher, and that's what I'm looking at in the future, you know. What are we really doing? I think and we...three years ago we passed a bill and now we're trying to totally undo that. I'm a person, you know, a spade is a spade. We did it. Maybe that's what we should keep...you know, adhere to what we have done. So I was going to give the balance of my time to Senator Landis, but I don't think I have very many seconds left.

SENATOR CUDABACK: I'm sorry, your time is up, Senator. Senator Bourne, followed by Senator Beutler and 11 others.

SENATOR BOURNE: Thank you, Mr. President. Members, I listened intently to Senator Stuthman and, number one, this does not allow, in my opinion, particularly with the amendment we're discussing, it does not allow the Metropolitan Utility District to serve the entire state. He mentions, and this is a good argument, he mentions that these infrastructures will be off the tax rolls, and I don't know that he's wrong, but I will tell you I can give you a chart that shows the differential in rates and it is significant, and we can go into that a little bit later. Senator Stuthman also mentioned a bill that we put into place, the municipal gas...excuse me, the Municipal Natural Gas System Condemnation Act. That was LB 384. And I have heard this criticism, that we should not be turning that on its head under LB 748, and we do. We eliminate the natural gas...the System Condemnation Act. We eliminate it. But let me tell you what's in that act, and it's a 24-step process whereby the city takes over and operates a gas system. I don't think I can get through this in five minutes, so I'll push my light again. Step one, the members of the governing body or city staff become aware of one or more of the following regarding the utility: the utility is a material threat to public health and safety; there's a failure to meet generally accepted industry standards of customer service; there's excessive rates or financial instability. This takes about 6 to 12 months, according to my chart. Step two, the city collects more information and if the issue is health or safety or customer service, the city, number