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FLOOR DEBATE

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LB 48, 748

order the utility to abandon the main. Kept building. Construction of the TBS went forward, at MUD's risk. Unfortunately, MUD took the risk at the expense of its ratepayers. And this finding says, over and over again, MUD did not even analyze or model whether the actual gas flow to the areas would improve the system, but simply took it on a gut feeling. Secondly, that they did no economic modeling as to whether it was cost-effective or not. It finds that it was not in the public interest, three, and perhaps four, different ways. The PSC eventually says that the \$400,000 of construction is not in the public interest, and we had to undo the \$400,000 of public payments. We had to undo \$400,000 of public purchases, under the way we do business now. And you know what LB 748 says? It says, you know, MUD gets to do this anywhere next to their facility. And this was the facility they built and had to get rid of because it wasn't in the public interest. That's the amendment before you. Have you heard one genuinely persuasive reason why LB 748 advances the public interest? We've been at it for nearly two hours, and I haven't heard one. This should be recommitted to the committee. Why? Because it's the way to get to the issue of, look, this isn't ready. And this...LB 748 isn't ready. By the way, I will tell you, it's not ready because it's bad policy. You know what it most undoes? It most undoes the one tool we've got, which is LB 78, which says, in the case of a conflict, take it to the PSC and run it against those five criteria to see if it's in the public interest. That tool we have now. LB 748 essentially repeals that idea and steps back from that idea. As you can see, why would they? Well, sure, they built a \$400,000 facility and had to eat it, and they eventually sold it, because they got their hand caught in this process. Of course they hate this process; look what happened to them. We shouldn't do...we shouldn't make that system null and void. What we should do is to make that system the first stop. Not the last stop, the first stop. We should have the entities go to the PSC and say, look, we're beyond our voters, we're beyond our boundaries, we're into no man's land. If we go into no man's land, is it best that we be the ones to do it? Is that in the public interest? That's what we should do. And it, by the way, happens to be in LB 48. If you've heard a convincing argument for LB 748 as advancing the public interest, keep the bill alive, keep it out here, and grind it