

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

May 19, 2005

LB 673

SENATOR LOUDEN: Because, according to the way the law is written, it's up to the landowner to manage the prairie dogs on their land or take care of them.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: No, I know what the law says. The law is designed to try to keep the counties from being responsible for this. They're trying to shift the responsibility to the landowner. What I'm saying is this, or asking. We eliminate this bill. The counties do have the money to pay this but they choose not to. Isn't that true?

SENATOR LOUDEN: Well, I don't think they want to dip into their reserve fund for something, for anything for that matter. They usually keep those reserve funds in case of storms or something like that that's unforeseeable catastrophes that happen to them, and that's usually what they have their reserve funds for. In the counties where I live anyway, that's what those funds are kept back for, whether a bridge gets washed out or whether they have to use it for snow removal after a blizzard or what.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Okay. We know counties and nobody else wants to spend money which the county doesn't have to spend if they can get around it. But if prairie dogs are a serious enough problem, the counties could pay for the management themselves but they choose not to do so. Isn't that true?

SENATOR LOUDEN: Okay. At the present time in the western counties, there's, like, 15 counties or whatever there is out there, that hire the APHIS people, the USDA wildlife specialists, to control some wild animals, the coyotes, and some predators, and prairie dogs in some places. They're already doing something like that. Those counties all put up a certain amount of money into a fund so that they can have a...contract a specialist to go out there and work on some of this if they can.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: So we don't really need this bill. It's not a situation where the counties can't pay; it's a situation where they don't want to pay.

SENATOR LOUDEN: No, I wouldn't...I would disagree with that. It's a situation where you have to have some rules in place so