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LB 645

number for you, but they have indicated they will make the monies available to fund the study.

SENATOR BURLING: Okay, thank you. I, too, have always had a real problem with public entities in competition with private in several areas, since I've been in the Legislature. I'm supportive of LB 645 because of that reason, and I thank all of those who have worked so hard already on this bill. And I turn the rest of my time back to the Chair.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Burling. Senator Louden, followed by Senator Chambers.

SENATOR LOUDEN: Thank you, Mr. President and members of the body. When we go into these type of procedures on what we're going to do with public power, and what public power is allowed to do, I think we need to think back on the history in Nebraska, of why we are with public power in Nebraska. I don't know if there's any of you left anymore that remember when we didn't have electricity all over Nebraska. We didn't get it because independent IOUs, investor-owned utilities, went out and put it out there. We got it because it was government subsidies, cheaper interest rates, and we came out with what was REA, rural electrification. Now we have mostly rural public power districts serving Nebraska on electricity. Up until then, we had co-ops that were formed on local levels to start the process, and back in the fifties or sixties, whenever it was, they...a lot of them changed over to public power districts. I think we're on the same edge right now with our telecommunications. In the area where I live, it was...it was a co-op, electrical utility district that brought Internet service into the Alliance area to start with. It wasn't independent investors that brought that in; it was the co-op that put up the money, brought it in. Right now there's Internet service in the area, and that's Hemingford Telephone Co-op brought that in and has developed it after the technology came across, not that they would be controlled by something like this, because they are private cooperatives. We have to remember, then, our Internet service. When we were looking for Internet service, it wasn't the local investor-owned Internet services that were servicing the people out in the rural areas. It was Internet service that