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FLOOR DEBATE

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LB 645

taking a hold of. It's utility-based. We want to make sure that that...you know, that the people that are coming up and analyzing, you know, the connections to your house and everything else are, I guess, regulated and as certified as...I don't know if that makes any sense. But I'm getting to this idea where the public comes up with a little better feeling about dealing with natural gas issues when they feel like there's maybe more regulation involved. At least, that's the inclination I've always received. Now, this industry, the broadband industry, is closer to free market than utility-oriented. Senator Chambers brought up earlier the whole idea behind hospitals and the competition between publics and privates. Do you think a privately owned hospital enjoys competing against a university-funded and a university-based hospital? I would venture to guess, no, they do not. As a matter of fact, they're losing. And I think if you look at the numbers, that's a difficult situation for those entities. What I brought up on an earlier occasion is that if we can prevent...and part of this study can probably help us deal with some of that. If we can prevent that encroachment, and if LB 645 will allow us or help us to do that, then I think it's worth pursuing. Because if we can prevent that direction, if we can prevent as much of the public and private competition, head to head, as we can, in an industry that's not necessarily expected by the public to be that regulated or to be...or to have that safety consciousness associated with it, then we run forward with it. We do not want publics in general competing with privates, whenever we...private organizations. Whenever we can help it, we need to move in that direction. I don't know...

SENATOR CUDABACK: One minute.

SENATOR FRIEND: I don't know if this helps us move in that direction. What I would say is, incorporating some of the components of LB 645, I would submit that they would. But I also would submit that there's only one way to find out, and that's to drive it forward. I don't know if that helps. I'll get out. Mr. President, thank you.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Friend. Mr. Clerk, items for the record, please.