

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

January 10, 2006

waste issues are going to get tougher. I think the environmental issues are going to get tougher. They're not going to get easier. We may not have as many bills as some committees are referenced to. I would acknowledge that the Revenue Committee and the Judiciary Committee are probably busier. I would remind this body the subject areas that the Natural Resources Committee covers. We get all the public power issues. That's the electric industry in our state. We're the only 100 percent public power state in the nation and, because of that, our rates are probably 20 percent cheaper than the surrounding states. We get all the environmental issues; Department of Environmental Quality, over 200 employees. And if you think the environmental issues are going to get easier, I think you're wrong. I think you're dead wrong, and you know that. You're on the committee. And we can smile about this. I'm not going to be here next year. The Department of Natural Resources, a very important agency, oversight over our water, that's going to get tougher. And then we have the Game and Parks issues. Every year we seem to have a debate about park fees and hunting and fishing fees, whatever. It's always interesting, and we've got some interesting bills on Game and Parks this year. And I think you see...maybe what we need to do is get a lot of people to come down and testify this year and have our hearings last till 7:00 every evening, and then the Rules Committee might have a different opinion on this. But anyway, I have not voluntarily given up a day of the Natural Resources Committee. I did say that we could probably get our work done in less time if we had to, but I think the quality of the work we'll put out will suffer. If a day was going to be taken away from Natural Resources, I would certainly prefer it be a Friday rather than a Wednesday. Now that would be doable, but I don't know how you mix the two committees. That will be Senator Pedersen's problem, if he's around as Chair of that committee a year from now. So I'm not going to dwell on this. I'm going to vote red, not because I object to the Retirement Committee having permanent status. I don't want to object to that. Matter of fact, it needs its day in the sun. I think it could be a little more thought-out, and I would be glad to sit down with any of you and do that as the session proceeds. I think there's better ways to handle it than to take a...than to take a Wednesday away from the Natural Resources Committee. I