

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

March 15, 2006

LB 1060

SENATOR BAKER: Thank you, Senator Beutler. Senator Fischer, you're recognized to speak, followed by Senator Kruse.

SENATOR FISCHER: Thank you, Mr. President and members. I would have to disagree with Senator Beutler. I don't believe that I did misunderstand the intent. I have read what he has passed out to all members here on page 108, what the intent is. I just disagree with his interpretation of what economic development is, especially in rural areas of this state. I'm not arguing about the importance of tourism in this state. Besides being on an arts council board, I also served on our local tourism board in my area for over 15 years. I know the value of tourism. I know how we tried to promote tourism in our area, and that in many ways we were successful. We are fortunate in northeast Nebraska and in the Sandhills to have attractions, I prefer to call them treasures, such as Niobrara River, that does attract tourists. So I don't believe I have misunderstood the intent language on page 108. But I would argue about what true economic development is, and in rural Nebraska, I don't believe the majority of people there are looking to hold a festival, although that does bring in some visitors. The Niobrara River brings in visitors. But I won't argue that point on this bill right now. Senator Beutler talked about a one-time contribution that this would be, and yes, the intent language says it's going to be a one-time contribution, and the money is going to be earmarked for economic development. You know, that's great. I had my staff pull the transcript from 1998, when the first \$5 million was put into this endowment. And in that transcript--if you would like, I have it here--but I'd like to read some. It talks about the result of the interest which the...remember, this endowment just uses the interest; it doesn't touch the original \$5 million. I'm quoting Senator Maurstad, who was a cosponsor of the original bill: As a result of the interest that will be obtained from not only the \$5 million put up by the public sector, but also the one-to-one match by the private sector, will be put--you'll have to excuse some of the...as we all stumble on a mike--will put the arts in a strong enough position where they will not have to come back to the state to ask for additional funds to continue their programs. We were told, and I was not here, but as a citizen of this state, I was told and you were told, if you were in here in