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LB 1249

SENATOR REDFIELD: Thank you, Mr. President, members of the body. I'm a student of history, but I can feel the gray hairs popping out on my head as I realize how long I have been here in the body. Eight years, and my first introduction to this whole issue was when Senator Thompson came to the Urban Affairs Committee with a bill dealing with double piping. And it was a safety issue. We actually had construction crews who would go in, they would get the maps, they would look for the pipe, they'd find the pipe, they'd think they were safe, they'd dig that bulldozer back in the ground and boom! They'd hit something because they didn't know there was a second pipe. That was my introduction to the gas wars. And I'm going to call them the gas wars because they have become just that over the eight years that I have been here. You would think that grown-ups could agree, that grown-ups could work it out and certainly, it's not for lack of trying. I was on the Urban Affairs Committee. Senator Landis actually was not on the committee at the time that we decided to spend about \$50,000 to contract for a professional study on how we should regulate natural gas in the state of Nebraska. They came back with their recommendations. We did come back with a bill, and we put regulation under the PSC. I will tell you, however, the end result did not put all of natural gas under the regulation of PSC. It only put the private under that regulation. And the cost of regulation is borne only by the customers of the private natural gas providers. It is not borne by all of the citizens of the state of Nebraska. There are those who say that MUD has its bill out there, and Senator Landis has his bill out there, and they're opposites. I would tell you no, they're not, because in 2003, there was a bill introduced before the Urban Affairs Committee, it was LB 690, and the sponsor was Senator Redfield. And that, in fact, would be the opposite of the MUD bill, and in that bill it repealed the Municipal Natural Gas Regulation Act and it replaced it with the State Natural Gas Regulation Act. The natural gas was at that time regulated by the metropolitan utilities district in their service area, by the local governments and those municipalities which had their own natural gas systems, and when the natural gas was provided by investor-owned companies, at that time it was regulated by the municipalities that they served. And I was proposing in LB 690 that the Public Service Commission would regulate the