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Appropriations Committee
March 05, 2013

[AGENCY91]

KATHY McKILLIP: Hello. [AGENCY91]

SENATOR MELLO: Hi, there, Kathy. [AGENCY91]

KATHY McKILLIP: (Exhibits 19-22) Thanks. Senator Mello, Chairman, and members of the committee, I'm Kathy McKillip, M-c-K-i-L-i-p, and I'm the director with the Nebraska Tourism Commission. As we spoke of earlier, you're probably aware of the strategic plan that we had completed with LB684. And for the sake of time, I won't go into those specific details. But the charge for several of those components from the strategic plan was to review our organizational structure, our staffing, our regional growth/development patterns, funding resources, and an overall statewide assessment for the tourism industry. Tourism is a multibillion-dollar industry for the state of Nebraska, and it's a critical revenue generator for the state and for local economies. The industry is represented primarily by businesses in the leisure and hospitality sector, transportation, and retail. This money is the money that visitors spend on various goods and services that produce business receipts at these firms, which, in turn, generate earnings and employment for our Nebraska residents. The impact is significant. Total direct travel spending in 2012 alone was a conservative, and I emphasize conservative, \$3.1 billion. This represents a 5.6 percent increase over the preceding year, in current dollars. Direct travel spending in Nebraska generated 36,500 jobs, which did not include direct resident job spending that generated an additional 9,500 jobs. This generated earnings of more than \$603 million in 2012. Four out of five of these jobs were in the leisure and hospitality industry. The direct travel spending generated in 2012 was \$363 million in federal, state, and local tax revenues. This is equal with the direct travel spending of the state of Wyoming, which has a tourism marketing budget of \$11,067,000 and some change. Think about the revenue that we could generate with that kind of funding support. These numbers were recently gathered as a preliminary component of a current industry research analysis that's being conducted on behalf of

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the commission by Dean Runyan Associates. This implements the regional travel impact model. These numbers are accurate, conservative and represent a consistent pattern over the last ten years. Tourism is one of the very few industries that has an immediate impact on our state's revenue. It is also one of the few industries where outsourcing often does not occur at all. As a service-oriented industry, the impact is provided by real humans working real jobs. As legislators around the country...as they face difficult choices, many are coming to understand the power of tourism and tourism marketing as a revenue generator, not just for the industry but for the states' national perception as well. The power of tourism marketing as a revenue generator for a state is no different than how marketing is recognized as the engine driving sales and profits in the private sector. Recently in the state of Wisconsin, Governor Scott Walker proposed an increase in the state's tourism budget and supports his decision with the following remarks, and I quote: Other Midwestern states were starting to cut into our territory; we had to make changes; when someone doesn't come to Wisconsin because our marketing campaign was not big enough, we don't have the funds to compete, which then results in visitors having a great time in Illinois or Michigan, we may never have the chance to get them back and we've lost out. We are tough competitors by nature in Nebraska. Our state is smart, competitive, and conservative, and we've been very fortunate. Nebraska has caught the attention of the national and international markets with successful events such as the U.S. swim trials and the U.S. figure skating championships, just to begin the discussion here. These events generate revenue and exposure not only for our industry but for our entire state as well. It is important to maintain our competitiveness when bidding for such events. To do so, we must be prepared, organized, and ready to activate marketing dollars that have been allocated for such promotional support. This is why we respectfully ask the committee today to recommend appropriation of the \$750,000 per year from the general funds to promote such targeted events. The commission coordinates, prioritizes, and establishes statewide marketing plan efforts well in advance. With proper planning and increased funding support, communities and counties could apply for funding allocation that meet the criteria, and have the ability to host national events that would enhance communities

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and the attractions and strengthen our marketing efforts. This would work in tandem with the financial support of local communities and the private sector. The cost for a 30-second spot during prime time air on a major network can run anywhere between \$200,000 and \$250,000. According to Universal Information Services, Omaha was mentioned 43 times during the London Olympics, just the London Olympics. Those references reached an audience of 66 million people, with paid-ad equivalent of \$1.14 million. These are real numbers, important numbers that tell a story of how essential this industry is, not only for the local communities and our counties across Nebraska, but for the state. If you believe in Nebraska, you have to believe in us; you have to believe in tourism and the potential that we have. We need your help. We are the next-lowest-funded state agency in the nation to Kansas, whose budget is \$4.9 million and some change. We are better and stronger competitors than this. We can and must compete at a higher level in relating this industry and elevating it, for the good of Nebraska. The commission thanks you for your support regarding the \$250,000 of general funds that are currently appropriated in our budget and, with all due respect to the committee and Chairman Mello, to the allocation of \$750,000 requested for the nationally targeted events. We appreciate the opportunity to present the value and importance of tourism before the body here today and believe that the future of tourism has an important role to play when it comes to generating revenue for the state of Nebraska. Tourism is a key segment of the state of Nebraska's economic base. As the state's third-largest industry, tourism plays a critical role in the vitality of our state. And I would attempt to address and answer any questions at this time. [AGENCY91]

SENATOR MELLO: Thank you, Kathy. Are there any questions from the committee?
Senator Harms. [AGENCY91]

SENATOR HARMS: Kathy, thank you very much for your testimony. How has the reorganization worked for you--you know, changing this structure and giving you your own division and moving forward--how is that working out? [AGENCY91]

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KATHY McKILLIP: Well, it's been a...a very interesting six months since July 1, when we became Agency 91. And I think the component that I am most proud of personally is the unification of the industry. We've really had a lot of entities and organizations coming together to start having discussions of how we move this industry forward. So it's been very, very positive. Now from a financial point of view, we lost, naturally, a lot of shared resources when we were moved away from our sister ship family of DED, where we resided for 37 years. We had shared accounting services, shared legal services; we had shared research team, which...we do not have those components at this time. So that was different. And, you know, and rent is a little...you know, just some strictly day-to-day business operational funds that have impacted the move. Did that address your question, Senator Harms? [AGENCY91]

SENATOR HARMS: Yes. How did...with the shared responsibility, what did that actually cost you in dollars which you don't have today? I mean, the shared...you know, the shared accounting services and your office space and all that, what did that actually cost you, or what did you lose? [AGENCY91]

KATHY McKILLIP: Well, I would estimate that the shared resources lost that we had was anywhere between \$250,000 to \$300,000, depending on what percentage was allocated of that staff person's time. Let's say that a researcher maybe would have been assigned to us for 40 percent of their time; depending on what that salary was based, that's how that's allocated out. So depending on...as well as with accounting. With accounting, for us, it has been an expensive transition, because we had no accounting staff that went with us. And you can imagine, with the state of Nebraska, we need three people who can do accounting; we're a very small agency. So we're all learning and being retrained in many, many different ways to accommodate the requirements of the state of Nebraska. [AGENCY91]

SENATOR HARMS: When you go and you do the advertising, like, nationally or internationally, how do you track back how effective that really is? How do you really

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measure what you're doing is successful or not? [AGENCY91]

KATHY McKILLIP: That's a really good question. And there are some areas that I don't think we do a very good job of. And I don't know if we've done a very good job in the past, which is why I mentioned that the numbers were incredibly conservative when it comes to our revenue generation. Earlier when I mentioned that we've been spending some thousands of dollars promoting in higher-end publications of golf like Arnold Palmer's Kingdom magazine, that magazine is just...it's a thick magazine. I don't know if any of you are familiar with it; it's really quite lovely. It's mostly in private clubs and in private airplanes. And I don't think Michael Jordan is going to go to our Web site and enter a key code so we know that he got the information from our ad. He's going to have his people tell them: We're going to the Sandhills. So there are some areas we have a hard time tracking. But generally we key it in so that when they hit the Web site or when they respond to the ad in the marketing component, we have a way of tracking it. We have different ways of tracking on the Web, different ways of tracking on publications; and we also do it differently when it comes to media. [AGENCY91]

SENATOR HARMS: When we were on the previous bill that we talked about, and you did testify in regard to the golf... [AGENCY91]

KATHY McKILLIP: Right. [AGENCY91]

SENATOR HARMS: ...the senior golf, and you had mentioned about planning and... [AGENCY91]

KATHY McKILLIP: Um-hum. [AGENCY91]

SENATOR HARMS: ...you needed a plan, were you...I guess I wasn't for sure whether or not you were saying that you had been left out of that whole thing, and you came at the last minute to...would you help clarify that for me? [AGENCY91]

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KATHY McKILLIP: I...I think that's a fair assessment. [AGENCY91]

SENATOR HARMS: Okay. [AGENCY91]

KATHY McKILLIP: There's no secret, I don't believe, that, with the U.S. Senior Open, these type of events take a very long time in planning. And that process goes way out; they're already looking, you know, three years out. The organization that was hired to come in and do this event for Omaha has been here for three years. My last meeting with the U.S. Senior Open organizational group was in January of 2012. That's nowhere near their fault or component. But that's just part of this planning process of sharing information, so that when we do these events we get the best out of our marketing dollars. We know it's a big event; we're going to plan a little ways out. So we're going to allocate some funds for marketing in these publications to help get that specific niche market to Nebraska, to come to the U.S. Open. Such as the Ryder Cup, those who attended there, we advertised there. However, we could do more; we could emphasize more on our golf campaign. When we're three months out, and now we might have some discussions, it's kind of tough trying to massage it in because I'm sure that some of their private investors and supporters have already had some branding rights, if you will, for their contributions, and rightfully so. [AGENCY91]

SENATOR HARMS: So are you, then, just simply asking to be brought into this thing, these kinds of planning processes, much earlier so you can budget appropriately and...is that what you're really saying to us? [AGENCY91]

KATHY McKILLIP: I think that, one, we need to be part of the discussions, yes. Yes, Senator Harms. Two, if there's going to be allocations of funds, and if we were to have the \$750,000, to which...an example, and an example only: the Omaha Sports Commission wants to go after the "world cup," if you will, of volleyball in September, and they come to us and say: We have this event; we would like to know if this would fit the

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criteria of \$200,000 of such a \$750,000; would you be in for that? Yes, that would meet the markets and the criteria of what we try to generate for the state. It's actually...you know, greater Nebraska gets it; they understand the value of having the U.S. Senior Open and the swim trials. When you see Nebraska on the touch pads of the swim trials, that's priceless for us; that's in competition with Omega. It's very important. So we just want to be part of those discussions and have some funds in a reserve so that we're not doing that hiccup-glitch, if you will, every other year in the years. We deserve it as an industry, as a state. We owe that to ourselves to take us to the next level. I think that would help us do it. [AGENCY91]

SENATOR HARMS: Well, that's one of the reasons why we wanted to move you out, make you independent, so we could take you to the next level. [AGENCY91]

KATHY McKILLIP: Yeah. I mean, we have to. It's one of those...it is one of those industries that's not going to go away. Even in a recession, our industry has been very, very resilient. We've had, you know, the 5.6 percent growth just last year alone. But as...Nebraska, a conservative state, with those conservative numbers, we're a good bang for the buck when it comes to a vacation and getting away for five days across the state. And that's being recognized nationally. And we need to do more to elevate ourselves at a national level, as well. [AGENCY91]

SENATOR HARMS: Thank you. [AGENCY91]

KATHY McKILLIP: Oh, thank you. [AGENCY91]

SENATOR MELLO: Are there any further questions from the committee? Kathy, I have one final question, I guess, and it's in relation to the \$750,000 request that you have in your testimony. We just heard LB582. If the committee was to move forward and provide that recommendation of \$750,000 each year, General Fund, that would be ongoing, in theory, be built into your base. Would the commission have a problem, since

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you did testify in a neutral capacity, would the commission have a problem if the committee and the Legislature decided to earmark \$250,000 of that, the first year, for LB582, which we just heard a hearing on, instead of appropriating a separate amount for LB582, let's say? [AGENCY91]

KATHY McKILLIP: No, I believe that the appropriate answer would be to say, thank you. (Laughter) I think that part of that is we would understand that would get it started, so we could start the discussions of how this moves forward. I think it's important to also recognize that I'm not just talking about metropolitan communities here. We have some incredible resources and facilities that are getting national acclaim. We recently just came back from the National Western Stock Show, to which we were a sponsor, so that we could step our game up in that market. The Denver market is very expensive to go into. And we were a sponsor at that show with Coors, Dodge Ram, Frontier Airlines, and Nebraska Tourism. We were in the top four. And we had so much chatter saying, what are they up to? Because they want to know, what are they doing out here? What is going on out here? And we had so much engagement, it was really profound. I think western Nebraska is really going to have a great feedback from that; our park system is going to really have a great feedback from that. That's what we need to start looking at. So when we look at this \$750,000 and we think it's just a metropolitan or it's just the U.S. Senior Open...because it's natural that there are some of these events that cannot be housed in some of our communities and counties across the state. However, if Grand Island or Kearney or North Platte wants to...North Platte NEBRASKAland DAYS wants to give Frontier Days a run for their money and book Garth Brooks next year for their 50th anniversary, there you go. You've got Grand Island, the facilities there for the livestock...the buzz is everywhere. It was all over the National Stock Show, how well those facilities are for livestock. Maybe they want to go after the national alpaca association's annual meeting. I am not the one to say what events would make it for that county. But each county has something to contribute to the process. [AGENCY91]

SENATOR MELLO: Do you...would you envision moving forward, then...and four years

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I've been here, or this would be my fifth year, we've seen in front of this committee now four different bills on...two on the golf, the U.S. Senior Golf Open, one on the national Special Olympics, and one on the U.S....the swim trials and the U.S. figure skating championship, four bills in front of the Legislature for funding. Would you see national events like that from here on out, if we were to approve your budget request, they would now start going to the Tourism Commission instead, where senators wouldn't be introducing pieces of legislation to appropriate new funding for large national events, and instead these events would go through a process through your agency, instead, to make that request instead? [AGENCY91]

KATHY McKILLIP: I think that's the original intent. However, I would hope that the senators would still want to be actively engaged in the process, because it takes all of us to understand what these events are. They're not easy to pull off. And the fact is that I'm not saying we're just going to go only after the U.S. swim trials; though we've made a pretty good name for ourselves, and we don't know how that bid is going to turn out, and it is pretty phenomenal. But there are those other levels. I would anticipate that the process would come through the commission, but I would expect engagement and dialogue throughout the industry, including our elected officials... [AGENCY91]

SENATOR MELLO: Okay. [AGENCY91]

KATHY McKILLIP: ...to see how that process would work. [AGENCY91]

SENATOR MELLO: I mean, I guess my question just is, is whether or not, if we were to appropriate your budget request, if whether or not we're going to continue to see the same process we have been seeing for a number of years, where events, large events, are coming to the Legislature directly, outside, away from formerly DED, now...or formerly it would be outside of the Nebraska Tourism Commission. [AGENCY91]

KATHY McKILLIP: Right. [AGENCY91]

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SENATOR MELLO: If we were to appropriate, you know, a certain amount of money...
[AGENCY91]

KATHY McKILLIP: Um-hum. [AGENCY91]

SENATOR MELLO: ...every year in your budget for large national events, if it's...you know, are you, I mean, are you getting what I'm saying? [AGENCY91]

KATHY McKILLIP: I understand. I would hate to lock us in to the fact that, yes, if you just give us \$750,000, that's it, you'll never have any other request. I would hate to...
[AGENCY91]

SENATOR MELLO: Um-hum. [AGENCY91]

KATHY McKILLIP: ...lock us in to that, because what if we do really, really well?
[AGENCY91]

SENATOR MELLO: Um-hum. [AGENCY91]

KATHY McKILLIP: I mean, what...of a sudden, it's like \$750,000, but we really had the opportunity for \$1.2 million? And we could have. [AGENCY91]

SENATOR MELLO: Okay. [AGENCY91]

KATHY McKILLIP: And I'm not talking... [AGENCY91]

SENATOR MELLO: Okay. [AGENCY91]

KATHY McKILLIP: ...little events. But, I mean, what if we get up there...? It's kind of like

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you have to believe in the fact that it will happen. [AGENCY91]

SENATOR MELLO: Um-hum. [AGENCY91]

KATHY McKILLIP: So will that...will it need to be revisited? Maybe. [AGENCY91]

SENATOR MELLO: Okay. [AGENCY91]

KATHY McKILLIP: Should it slow up the process of here and there, the piecework? I would hope, because that's the goal of proper planning. [AGENCY91]

SENATOR MELLO: Um-hum. [AGENCY91]

KATHY McKILLIP: That's the process of planning, so that we can be prepared and we could allocate our marketing dollars on a much stronger level and leverage it with the communities as well and make sure they have input as well. [AGENCY91]

SENATOR MELLO: Okay. All right. Thank you, Kathy. [AGENCY91]

KATHY McKILLIP: Does that answer your question... [AGENCY91]

SENATOR MELLO: That answers my question. [AGENCY91]

KATHY McKILLIP: ...Chairman Mello? [AGENCY91]

SENATOR MELLO: Thank you. [AGENCY91]

KATHY McKILLIP: Okay. [AGENCY91]

SENATOR MELLO: Are there any further questions? Seeing none, thank you, Kathy.

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[AGENCY91]

KATHY McKILLIP: Oh, thank you. [AGENCY91]

SENATOR MELLO: Are there... [AGENCY91]

KATHY McKILLIP: Now, I did...I did...Walt, come on up here. [AGENCY91]

SENATOR MELLO: Are there any other testifiers on behalf of Agency 91, the Nebraska Tourism Commission? [AGENCY91]

WALT RADCLIFFE: Senator Mello, members of the committee...three times...
[AGENCY91]

SENATOR MELLO: Wow. [AGENCY91]

WALT RADCLIFFE: ...in a row today, I know. [AGENCY91]

SENATOR MELLO: This is something special for us. [AGENCY91]

WALT RADCLIFFE: For me, too, Senator. Walt Radcliffe, R-a-d-c-l-i-f-f-e. I'm actually not here on behalf of anyone; I think I'm here on...because I've represented people on this. I'd just like to echo what Kathy has said. With this Senior Open deal, we've been...I was first approached in 2008, and Richard Baier was the head of DED. There wasn't...when I talked to him originally, I thought there was a fund that you could go apply for, which is what we would have done. I'm probably just pointing out the obvious; but as you say, for five years now you've had these requests come before you. I think setting up a fund down there...and you're going to review that every year...or every two years. And if they don't use it, it would be reappropriated. And if they use it for things you don't think they should, you can respond accordingly. I just don't see a downside to

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it. I really don't. And it's...you're giving people in state government the management tools and the money they need to do something and to do something, quite frankly, that has been shown to this committee to be a...to be I'd say a necessity...it's not a necessity, but certainly to be something that's desirable. So if there's any questions, I'd be happy to answer them. [AGENCY91]

SENATOR MELLO: Thank you, Walt. Are there any questions from the committee?
[AGENCY91]

WALT RADCLIFFE: Thank you. [AGENCY91]

SENATOR MELLO: Seeing none, thanks, Walt. Next testifier on Agency 91, the Nebraska Tourism Commission? [AGENCY91]

BOB ANDERSON: (Exhibit 23) Senator Mello, committee members, I thank you for allowing me to testify. I'm Bob Anderson; I'm the executive director of the Nebraska Hotel and Motel Association. And Anderson is spelled A-n-d-e-r-s-o-n. I'll...just like to hit some comments with you. You know, the hotels and motels are the contributor of the lodging tax, the sole provider, for travel and tourism, of about \$3.9 million to \$4 million per year. We continue to rank as one of the lowest-funded states in the country for the amount spent on tourism and travel promotion. And we are the third-largest industry in the state of Nebraska. I appear before you today to support the Nebraska Tourism Commission's request for an additional General Fund expenditure of \$750,000. And you have been talking about that, and I think there's a need for it. Actually, we would like to see the expenditure for tourism double even what we have now. And I think we can show a return on it, because most of the statistics we see: for every \$1 spent, we get a \$7 return on it. The purpose of this request on the extra funding is for special projects like swim trials in Omaha, State Games being pursued in Lincoln, additional marketing for NEBRASKAland DAYS and other tourism events that bring in more travelers to the state. And I think with this type of appropriation, you know, the commission could see

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these events earlier and put the money behind it, you know, where they coordinate their other activities and we get it into a statewide basis that helps everybody. Also, the purpose of this request is to provide funding in advance to entice types of these events in Nebraska. And I hope you would consider this extra appropriation and also consider additional money for tourism in general. I think what we see with the new commission, with their board and what they're under way in...as Kathy mentioned, they've just been there, you know, for six months. I'm hopeful, with that record, we'd come back to you and ask for more money on future years. But this is our request, to go along with the \$750,000, at this point. Thank you. [AGENCY91]

SENATOR MELLO: Thank you, Bob. Are there any questions from the committee?
Senator Nelson. [AGENCY91]

SENATOR NELSON: Thank you, Mr. Anderson. Could you refresh my memory on how many members are on the commission, and are they from all over the state?
[AGENCY91]

BOB ANDERSON: It's a statewide commission. I believe there's eight of them. And there...has special interests, you know, they come...various groups, but there's three that came in...they converted over what was there of that, previous to the commission. And so they tried to have, you know, one east, central, and then western, and then the various special interests. For instance, like, the Nebraska hotel and motel industry has a representative, and some of the others. And I don't recall the other special interests that are on there. [AGENCY91]

SENATOR NELSON: Well, under this proposal that commission would be deciding how much a special event would get from the tourism group, is that the way it would work then? They would...we would be out of it all together, the Legislature. [AGENCY91]

BOB ANDERSON: I don't think that's going to happen. (Laugh) There is going to be

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some activities that are going to come here, and I think Senator Mello knows very well the activities he's been in contact with in the past. But I think what we can see is, from a statewide effort, you know...you know, the Lincoln area, western Nebraska, and Omaha. And they can get into these projects where they would come and apply for them earlier. And they can also put more, you know, not just, you know, a couple months' effort in promoting to the commission, but they could get there a year ahead of time or two years ahead of time with this type of appropriation. And I don't think it's going to cut out other...when we get a special opportunity, like swim trials or whatever, or we have something at Kearney where they're coming with, you know, some activity out there, I think you're still going to get that request. [AGENCY91]

SENATOR NELSON: Thank you. [AGENCY91]

SENATOR MELLO: Senator Wightman. [AGENCY91]

SENATOR WIGHTMAN: Thank you. Mr. Anderson, thank you for being here. You mentioned...or you didn't, I think the previous testifier mentioned that Nebraska was 49th, I think, is that correct, in the amount that the state... [AGENCY91]

BOB ANDERSON: I believe that is. [AGENCY91]

SENATOR WIGHTMAN: ...what? [AGENCY91]

BOB ANDERSON: We're way down there. [AGENCY91]

SENATOR WIGHTMAN: Oh, okay. Well, I think she said we were 49th. And you probably...may not know the answer to this, but as far as tourism, and it's supposedly our third-leading industry, how many states...where would we rank nationally? Do you have any idea, or...? [AGENCY91]

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BOB ANDERSON: I think from a funding standpoint for tourism, I believe it was mentioned, we're about 49th. And, you know, with a return of an investment on, you know, every \$1 put it, you get \$7 back, it's a heck of a return. I don't think any other industry can show that type of return. And I...but, on the other hand, I'd like to see this commission work; or at least our association would like to see them show positive results. And I think, with those results, then we can come and ask you. My personal preference would be like Oklahoma had at one time. They had a 0.5 percent tax on every sale in the state that went to tourism. I'd love to see that, but I don't think that's going to be possible. [AGENCY91]

SENATOR WIGHTMAN: But as far as knowing where we rank in tourism among the 50 states, you probably don't have that information. [AGENCY91]

BOB ANDERSON: I think it's...we were 49 out of 50. [AGENCY91]

SENATOR WIGHTMAN: No, that was the funding, as I understood it, that we...
[AGENCY91]

BOB ANDERSON: Yeah. [AGENCY91]

SENATOR WIGHTMAN: ...provided the 49th-highest for funding. But I'm talking about as far as total dollars that we could bring in from tourism. [AGENCY91]

BOB ANDERSON: I'm sorry. I think I...we can get that. I have it in the office, but I don't have it with me. Sorry. [AGENCY91]

SENATOR WIGHTMAN: And I understand that even if we were 49th, and I'd hope we're not that low, but even if we were 49th, more funding might get in more money and be able to make what we have in Nebraska known to a lot of people throughout the country. But... [AGENCY91]

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BOB ANDERSON: We have come a long ways in the last so many years, even before this committee, in the funding. You know, we ended up getting \$500,000, you know, for each of the biennium years for, you know...and that money has been converted back. And I think it's shown some results. I think, because of that, some of the results, that's why you went along with the commission, where we have elected people that are now accountable for what Kathy puts together, and all, for a plan. And I think they'll be able to come with some great results. You know, this is Nebraska, and we can't go jumping for money without showing you the results where we want the money. [AGENCY91]

SENATOR WIGHTMAN: Thank you, Bob. [AGENCY91]

SENATOR MELLO: Are there any further questions? Seeing none, thank you, Bob.
[AGENCY91]

BOB ANDERSON: Thank you, Senators. [AGENCY91]

SENATOR MELLO: Are there any other testifiers on behalf of Agency 91, the Nebraska Tourism Commission? Good evening. [AGENCY91]

ROGER JASNOCH: (Exhibit 24) It is already. Good evening, Chairman Mello, committee members. My name is Roger Jasnoch, J-a-s-n-o-c-h, 8 Crestview Drive, Kearney, Nebraska, 68848. I'm here before you to respond to you in terms of the NETA group, Nebraska Travel Association. I'm passing out a letter from our president; I'd just like to add my own thoughts to that, if I could. I'm here to support the general funds of \$750,000 to attract national tourism events to Nebraska. First of all, I'd like to thank you for the \$250,000 that you currently provide. With this increased investment, we will be able to attract even more national events like the swim trials, the figure skating; and my friends in Grand Island host the national alpaca show; and in Kearney every few years we host the national and international North American falconers meet. With these

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dollars in place, we can better position the state to host even more national events through a partnership with local communities in the state. And with that partnership, sometimes without additional funds from the Tourism Commission we might be unable to be able to host that event, because what the Tourism Commission provides is, certainly, some start-up dollars, and the communities certainly provided many more dollars. And so it's important to have that match, if you will. Again, the letter from our chairman. Be glad to answer any questions of the senators. [AGENCY91]

SENATOR MELLO: Thank you so much for your testimony. Are there any questions from the committee? Seeing none, thank you. [AGENCY91]

ROGER JASNOCH: Very good. Thank you. [AGENCY91]

SENATOR MELLO: Are there any further testifiers on behalf of Agency 91, the Nebraska Tourism Commission? Seeing none, that will end tonight's hearing on Agency 91 and take us to our last hearing of the night, Agency 54, the Nebraska State Historical Society. Good evening. [AGENCY91]