

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Transportation and Telecommunications Committee March 4, 2025

**MOSER:** The meeting of Transportation and Telecommunications will come to order. My name is Mike Moser. I'm the chair of the committee. I represent District 22, which is Platte County and most of Stanton County. We'll introduce senators, beginning on my left.

**BOSN:** Good afternoon. I'm Carolyn Bosn. I represent District 25, which is southeast Lincoln, Lancaster County.

**DeBOER:** Good afternoon, everyone. Hope you're having a good day. My name is Wendy DeBoer. I represent District 10 in gorgeous northwest Omaha.

**BALLARD:** My name is Beau Ballard, and I represent District 21 in northwest Lincoln, northern Lancaster County.

**BRANDT:** Tom Brandt, Legislative District 32, Fillmore, Thayer, Jefferson, Saline, and southwestern Lancaster Counties.

**FREDRICKSON:** John Fredrickson, District 20, which is in central west Omaha.

**GUERECA:** Dunixi Guereca, downtown and south Omaha, LD 7.

**MOSER:** Our committee clerk is Connie Thomas. Our legal counsel is Gus Shoemaker. There are green testifier sheets on the table near the entrance to the room to complete and hand into the page when you come up, if you want to testify. Those not testifying but would like to record your presence, please sign the yellow sheet in the book on the table near the entrance. Handouts submitted by testifiers are included as part of the record as exhibits. Senators may come and go during the hearing. This is common and required as they may be presenting bills in other committees during this same time. Testimony will begin with the introducer's opening statement. Then we'll hear from supporters, then those in opposition, then those speaking in the neutral capacity. The introducer of the bill will then be given the opportunity to make closing statements, if they choose to do so. Please begin your testimony by giving us your first and last name, and also spell them for the record. We will be using a 3-minute timer light system today. No demonstrations of opposition or support are allowed on any testimony. Please be sure to turn off your cell phone or put them on vibrate. Our pages today are Alberto and Arnav. With that, we'll begin with Senator Ballard. Welcome.

**BALLARD:** Thank you, Chair Moser and members of the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee. My name is Beau Ballard. For the record,

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that is B-e-a-u B-a-l-l-a-r-d, and I represent District 21, northwest Lincoln, northern Lancaster County, here today to introduce LB619, a bill that will continue the planning and eventual construction of the East Beltway. LB619 appropriates \$15 million in grants to cities of the primary class and their respective counties to support the construction, construction, and infrastructure connecting the state and national highways. The bill contains compliance protections enforced by the Department of Transportation to ensure dollars are used for the intended purpose. More specifically, the bill provides the funding to move the East Beltway project forward. Although the project already has approval under federal and state regulations, funding is necessary to execute the plan. The East Beltway is a crucial investment in the future of Lincoln's transportation and the broader economic growth of southeast Nebraska and Nebraska as a whole. It is not just an infrastructure. It is a final link in an expressway that will improve mobility, reduce congestion, and enhance safety for residents, business, and travelers alike. I've introduced this bill a few times in my tenure in the Legislature and previous testimony you've heard from county commissioners that said this is the last piece of the puzzle in achieving a seamless regional connectivity. But you also hear el-- elected leaders outside of Lincoln and Lancaster County that say there's an, an urgent need for, for this project for safety concerns. With strong local support and clear direction, this bill provides the funding that strengthens Nebraska's transportation infrastructure. I look forward to having a good conversation and would be happy to answer any questions.

**MOSER:** All right. Questions from committee members? Senator Fredrickson.

**FREDRICKSON:** Thank you, Chair Moser. Thank you, Senator Ballard. So you, you, you-- that last part of your opening got me curious. So you mentioned-- so I, I can only imagine what some of the safety concerns might be, but can you elaborate a little bit more on how this would enhance safety on our roads?

**BALLARD:** Yeah. So, so I will say it. This-- actually, this bill actually came to my attention-- I represent Waverly. A good portion of this project will either start or begin in Waverly. And what I hear from teachers, school officials, they say we, we really have one of the largest school districts, definitely in Lancaster County and probably one of the larger in, in the state. So they have students going all the way from south-- southern part of Lancaster County all the way up north from Waverly, and they're traveling on 148th Street. A-- it's a, it's a major highway that also has combines, tractors, and

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so it's-- and so they have a concern that they want-- they have 16-year-olds driving on this road. And so, the East Beltway will, will enhance safety by getting them off 148th with, with harvest traffic, and so that's part of the safety, safety concerns as well.

**FREDRICKSON:** Make sense. Thank you.

**BALLARD:** Yes.

**MOSER:** Senator DeBoer.

**DeBOER:** Senator Ballard.

**BALLARD:** Yes, Senator DeBoer.

**DeBOER:** It looks like perhaps you have attempted to get around the special legislation problem by saying cities of primary class. Is that what you've done here?

**BALLARD:** I, I, I Learned from our first conversation a few years ago, and I think I achieved our goal.

**DeBOER:** I do think that you may pass some constitutional muster here.

**BALLARD:** That means the, that means the world.

**DeBOER:** There might be some other questions that I have at a later time, but--

**BALLARD:** I look forward.

**DeBOER:** --I think, at least constitutionally, on the face, it's not unconstitutional, so that's good.

**BALLARD:** Thank you, Senator DeBoer.

**MOSER:** Any other questions from committee members? Seeing none, thank you.

**BALLARD:** Thank you, Chair.

**MOSER:** Anyone to speak in support? If you plan to testify, please come toward the front. Get a little closer so that you can occupy the chair more quickly. Welcome.

**PAM DINGMAN:** Thank you. Good afternoon, Chairman Moser and members of the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee. My name is Pam

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Dingman, P-a-m D-i-n-g-m-a-n. I am the Lancaster County Engineer. Today, I'm here on behalf of my office, the Lancaster County Commissioners and the Professional Engineers Coalition to testify in support of LB619. The first agreement to define the corridor of the South and East Beltway was signed by NDOT, Lancaster County, and the city of Lincoln on April 12, 1995. Over the next several years, this partnership spent approximately \$1.2 million to complete the corridor and environmental study. The final study was approved by the Federal Highway Administration in 2002. This study identifies that in 1996, the payoff period for the East Beltway was just 13 years. In 2006, the corridor protection for the alignment was put in place. In 2007, the City of Lincoln and Lancaster County signed the interlocal agreement to purchase land that was needed for the Beltway. Several tracts of land have been purchased on the north end of the East Beltway. In 2018, my department conducted a traffic study on 148th Street, located east of the East Beltway from Highway 2 to Amberly Road in Waverly. That study indicates that without the East Beltway, 148th Street needs to be upgraded to a 4-lane road with intersection improvements by 2040 at the 2018 cost of \$40 million. In addition, that study identified 50 crashes from 2013-2018. In December of 2023, Lancaster County and the city of Lincoln partnered together to update the 1996 cost estimate for the East Beltway. The updated project estimate is a staggering \$5.51 million. The passing of the bipartisan infrastructure law has given us the opportunity to apply for grants and help get this project across the finish line. These grants require a fair amount of work to be completed prior to the submittal. However, in the case of the East Beltway, there's a fair amount of work that's already been done. Passing LB619 would help move the East Beltway forward for future generations. Regionally, many cities the size of Lincoln have beltways. Topeka, Kansas, Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Springfield, Missouri. Davenport, Iowa, to name a few. Building the East Beltway will pull traffic from Lancaster County and the city of Lincoln's congested corridors and provide more efficient routes for not just local traffic, but also regional traffic. The Beltway is a dream of mine, along with my peers at the city of Lincoln. We are dedicated to seeing this project to fruition. Please make the East Beltway a reality for the next generation. And I've also given you an exhibit of what the proposed Beltway looks like. Any questions?

**MOSER:** Questions from committee members? Senator Brandt.

**BRANDT:** Thank you, Chair Moser. Thank you, Engineer Dingman, for being here today. So we're moving this a mile and a half west of 148, it looks like.

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**PAM DINGMAN:** That is correct, approximately.

**BRANDT:** And, and you're, you're going to use the existing intersection on the South Beltway, right? You're going to splice into that, it looks like?

**PAM DINGMAN:** That is correct. That was the plan laid out in 1996.

**BRANDT:** You think the plan is still-- this will be the plan?

**PAM DINGMAN:** I think this is still the alignment.

**BRANDT:** OK.

**PAM DINGMAN:** I think there's some tweaking that will have to happen to the plan, because there's regulations and rules for highway construction that have changed in the last 30 years. One that comes to mind is shoulders are now required to be a little wider for expressways.

**BRANDT:** What happens to 148th when we build this? Is it just-- becomes a Saltillo Road? It just is another county road?

**PAM DINGMAN:** It-- 148th right now is, is just another county road. It's a very narrow road with 11-foot lanes, is very similar to Saltillo. It has similar safety problems and concerns. It is one of the fastest growing traffic corridors in Nebraska.

**BRANDT:** Actually, 148th is the East Beltway.

**PAM DINGMAN:** It is the de facto East Beltway--

**BRANDT:** It is the de facto.

**PAM DINGMAN:** --right now, similar to-- the same thing happened to Saltillo. And you know what my concern is, is that Saltillo became a really deadly road for Lancaster County, with a variety of crashes on it. 148th Street actually has a higher crash, crash incidence than Saltillo. And it just remains an extreme concern.

**BRANDT:** All right. Thank you.

**MOSER:** Other questions from committee members? Senator Bosn.

**BOSN:** Thank you. Thank you for being here. To sort of follow up on that, do you have data showing how many vehicles are traveling on 148th Street per day, on average?

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**PAM DINGMAN:** I do have data on it. I, I actually have some traffic counts with me, but I didn't bring them up to the desk. It's, it's really, I think, 8-- 8,000-10,000 cars when you get towards the north end of 148th Street, is, is where the concentration, especially once you're north of O Street, but in, in all areas, it is, it is a lot of traffic. And of course, we know that the 2-lane highway ceases to meet criteria once it gets to 15,000. I do expect with our communities continuing to grow east and the Waverly community continuing to grow, that that may be sooner than 2040.

**BOSN:** And do you know where the line is? So right now, individuals who reside outside city limits but in this area that-- on the map are attending Waverly High Schools and are traveling on 148th Street every morning and every afternoon to and from school, how far south-- does that still go all the way to Yankee Hill or are those students now going to Bennett, or do you know at all?

**PAM DINGMAN:** So I-- Senator, I only recall the extreme boundary because my children went to Waverly and I once agreed to take their friends home, not realizing they were in the furthest corner. And I think the furthest corner of Waverly School District that time was, was like 262nd Street and Van Dorn, if that makes sense. So it actually goes even south of the county, even like south and east of the county line.

**BOSN:** Well, I know it goes south of Van Dorn, personally, but I don't know how far south it goes. But OK. All right. That answers my questions. Thank you.

**MOSER:** Other questions? So you've only been working on this 30 years. That's like a week in the way it takes us to build roads.

**PAM DINGMAN:** So personally, I haven't been working on it 30 years, but I've been watching it for 30 years, so. Yeah.

**MOSER:** So you wouldn't go on the alignment of 148th, you'd go through the middle of all those sections?

**PAM DINGMAN:** You know, Senator, I appreciate that question. And so in that 1996 study, they studied several different corridors to select the best corridor for the East Beltway at the time. If we were to go on 148th Street, it would take out a really high volume of homes with the width that this needs to be.

**MOSER:** OK. I, I went to Kansas City this weekend and I drove. On Senator Ballard's advice, I took 148th to cut from the Interstate to

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Highway 2. That road sucks. The, the little gal that says reconfiguring, reconfiguring. She was just spinning. OK. Thank you for your testimony. Any other supporters? Welcome.

**DAVID CARY:** Good afternoon, Senator Moser and members of the Transportation Telecommunications Committee. My name is David Cary, D-a-v-i-d C-a-r-y. I am the director of the Lincoln-Lancaster County Planning Department, and I'm here on behalf of both the city of Lincoln and Lancaster County to provide testimony in support of LB619. I want to thank the members of the committee for your time today, and I also want to thank Senator Ballard for bringing this legislation forward. LB619 appropriates general funds to the Department of Transportation for transportation infrastructure, with the intent to help construct the planned East Beltway in Lancaster County. The alignment of this important transportation facility runs north and south along the eastern edge of Lincoln in Lancaster County. The East Beltway will connect Interstate 80 on the north to-- near Waverly to Highway 2 on the south at the interchange with the now constructed South Beltway. The city of Lincoln and Lancaster County have for decades included the East Beltway in its planning documents for the purpose of completing a freeway loop to serve all areas of, of the developing community of Lincoln. And I would add that it literally has been in our planning documents for more than 30 years, more like 50 years now, including East-- the South Beltway as well. The segments of the loop include Interstate 80 on the North, State Highway 77 on the west, the new South Beltway on the south, and this future East Beltway on the east. The complete loop will serve the city and county and enhance the future economic development to meet the transportation needs of our growing community far into the future. The East Beltway alignment does have formal corridor protection status, as Ms. Dingman said earlier. And the city of Lincoln and Lancaster County have been coordinating over the past several years with protecting key segments of that alignment to ensure construction of this transportation facility can occur in the future. The additional funding that would result from this legislation better ensures the-- this important facility can be built in the future. I thank you for the opportunity to discuss this today, and I'd be happy to answer any questions that you might have.

**MOSER:** Committee member questions? Thank you for your testimony.

**DAVID CARY:** Thank you very much.

**MOSER:** Other supporters of LB619.

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**BRUCE BOHRER:** Good afternoon, Chairman Moser and members of the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee. Bruce Bohrer, for the record, spelled B-r-u-c-e B-o-h-r-e-r. I'm the registered lobbyist for the Lincoln Chamber of Commerce speaking in support of LB619 on behalf of the Chamber. First of all, I want to thank Senator Ballard for introducing this legislation again, and I'd also like to thank him and many of the people you've already heard from for their engagement on our Chamber East Beltway path forward committee. Infrastructure-- a lot of what I was going to say has already been said. So I'm going to try to get this down to just kind of the, the main point. Infrastructure, as you all know, especially transportation infrastructure, is essential to growing Nebraska and Lincoln. We view LB619 is critical for regional growth, safety, and economic vitality that you've all heard of. Our Chamber East Beltway Path Forward Working Group is committed to working with local, state, and federal partners on this long-term project. Appreciate all the partners you've heard from already. I would just make a final point before I conclude, in saying that we have invested locally. It would be obviously nice to see some state investment, and I think that would also help us get some federal investment in this project, as well. With that, I'd be happy to answer any questions you might have.

**MOSER:** Thank you. Questions from committee members? Seeing none, thank you for your testimony.

**BRUCE BOHRER:** Thank you.

**MOSER:** More supporters? Welcome.

**CARTER THIELE:** Hello. Hi. Chairman Moser, members of the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee, my name is Carter Thiele. That's spelled C-a-r-t-e-r T-h-i-e-l-e, and I am the policy and research coordinator for the Lincoln Independent Business Association, here to strongly endorse LB619 as a step forward for growing our city and our state. We acknowledge that right now, the state has an immense burden to balance its budget. However, we also acknowledge that the investments in the East Beltway project are not only fiscally responsible but essential for necessary statewide growth. The recent revenue forecast attribute Nebraska's reduced estimated budget deficit to higher than expected corporate income tax collections, among other things. On that particular note, the East Beltway is a project located in an area that is primed for exponential commercial growth. Building this road will improve the interconnectivity of the region by serving as a viaduct between the state's 2 population centers and accelerate the eastward development



of Lincoln. Located a couple miles in the direction the city is growing fastest, within a generation that area will be filled with tens of thousands of more people and hundreds of new businesses that will contribute even more personal and corporate income tax. We can't tax our way out of our problems. We have to grow our population, expand our tax base, and develop our economy. That's what the East Beltway provides. It's not just a piece of infrastructure, but also a catalyst to helping the state garner higher than expected revenue forecasts for generations to come. In conclusion, LIBA urges LB619's passage as this overdue untapped potential for this project makes its financial investment not just fiscally responsible, but economically imperative. Thank you very much, and I would be happy to answer any questions.

**MOSER:** Any questions? Seeing none, thank you--

**CARTER THIELE:** Thank you.

**MOSER:** --for your testimony. Are there more supporters? Is there anyone here to speak in the opposition? Anybody to speak in opposition? How about in the neutral? Anyone here to speak in the neutral? Seeing none, Senator Ballard.

**BALLARD:** I just want to take time to say thank you to the committee for listening. As many of the testifiers said, I understand the state's fiscal situation and looking forward to-- just want to reiterate that this project is important to not only the city of Lincoln and Lancaster County, but also southeast Nebraska. I think you heard from county leaders, city leaders, and business leaders today that this project is critical to the growth of our state. And with that, I'd be happy to answer any questions.

**MOSER:** We'll start with Senator Brandt.

**BRANDT:** Thank you, Chairman Moser. Real quick. This \$15 million is for a study, or do you know what it's going for?

**BALLARD:** It's, it's-- yes. There was-- we just have-- there's some environmental studies we have to dust off, and that would be part of what this \$15 million would go for. In order to work with the federal government, you have to have most of these preliminary studies done. And so this, this money-- proposed money would go to, to help dusting off some of those.

**BRANDT:** And it would be matched by the, the city and the county?

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**BALLARD:** That is-- yes. No, so this, this one would not be matched.

**BRANDT:** OK.

**BALLARD:** This one would be just a direct appropriation, but we have done matching, matching awards in the past.

**BRANDT:** So, I mean, it would be possible. The Legislature could give \$7.5 million and the city and county could--

**BALLARD:** It could be. Yeah.

**BRANDT:** All right.

**BALLARD:** Or we could give the 15. And then, that's just the grant money and the city can--

**BRANDT:** Sure.

**BALLARD:** --chip in whatever they would like.

**BRANDT:** All right. Thank you.

**BALLARD:** Yes. Thank you.

**MOSER:** OK. Let's take Senator Fredrickson.

**FREDRICKSON:** Thank you, Chair Moser. Thank you, Senator Ballard. So I have further questions related to the fiscal. So, I mean-- I think-- I, I like what you're trying to do with this bill. I don't think it's any secret that I like the idea of investing in roads. And so, I think-- especially in a city like Lincoln, where there is a lot of growth. The-- have you had the opportunity to have any conversations with the Appropriations Committee about kind of the fiscal part here?

**BALLARD:** Yes. This bill actually was in Appropriations last year--

**FREDRICKSON:** Yeah.

**BALLARD:** --so that we had a good conversation in that committee.

**FREDRICKSON:** OK.

**BALLARD:** They opted not to fund it like many, many, many initiatives and measures that we've had in the past. But yes, I've had conversations with them in the past about this.

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**FREDRICKSON:** OK. OK. And-- well, I'll leave it at that for now. Thank you.

**BALLARD:** Thank you.

**MOSER:** Senator Guereca.

**GUERECA:** Thank you, Chair. Thank you for being here, Senator Ballard. Just, I guess, catch me up. You know, I'm new to the committee-- you to sort of-- where, where is the East Beltway? Kind of-- along-- the process. So we're here doing some environmental studies, we purchased some land. Does that kind of sum up--

**BALLARD:** That is-- yes. Purchased some of the, some of the right-of-way. And that's exactly what I wanted to-- with LB619. I wanted to kind of have a conversation with the committee, especially new members of the committee, that this is an important project for, for southeast Nebraska and for Nebraska as a whole. But yes, we have a lot of work to do, and that's-- part of it, just to keep the conversation moving and keep chipping away at this, at this issue, because, I mean, I think you heard it from the-- from Engineer Dingman. A lot of, a lot of communities have this. And they've seen exponential growth--

**GUERECA:** Yeah.

**BALLARD:** --in their, in their-- not only their cities and their counties, but their state.

**GUERECA:** Thank you.

**MOSER:** All right. Thank you very much. Any other questions? One last call. All right. Thank you, Senator. We had 3 proponent, 1 opponent, and 1 neutral testimony, testimony online. That brings us to LB714. Welcome, Senator Clements.

**CLEMENTS:** Thank you, Chairman Moser, members of the Transportation Telecommunications Committee. I'm Senator Rob Clements, R-o-b C-l-e-m-e-n-t-s. I represent Legislative District 2. I'm here to present you LB714. LB714 presents a reasonable strategy to restructure the collection and distribution of Nebraska's motor vehicle taxes and fees. LB714 is a companion bill to LB468, designed to offset county revenue lost due to inheritance tax reductions-- I plan to propose. This bill furthers that effort by not only allowing for the continued reduction of the inheritance tax, but also lowering the motor vehicle personal property tax. This would provide direct tax relief to

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Nebraskans who own a vehicle but may not own a home. Nationwide, Nebraska is one of 24 states that levy, levy a personal property tax on motor vehicles. 12 states, including Iowa, charge no annual personal property tax on passenger vehicles. 15 other states levy other types of taxes on vehicle ownership. Nebraska has higher motor vehicle taxes and fees than 4 of our 6 surrounding states. Only Kansas and Missouri are higher, who, according to a 2024 article, have some of the highest taxes on vehicles. Per handout number 1, there is a chart, a 2021 U.S. News and World Report ranking placed Nebraska as fifth highest in the country for annual cost of taxes and fees, with Kansas ranked first. South Dakota, our lowest-priced neighbor at number 43, charges a year 1 excise tax on newly purchased vehicles, but their licensing costs drop drastically after year one. Handout 2 shows licensing costs of our neighboring states. 60% of Nebraska's motor vehicle taxes go to public schools, totaling \$190 million. The only neighboring state that also does this is Kansas, where two-thirds of their taxes are directed to schools, which also contributes to their high taxes. The other 5 surrounding states use their motor vehicle taxes and fees for roads and bridges or county operations. I believe this is a better use of these funds, and LB714 attempts to bring our motor vehicle taxes in line with these purposes. LB714 will reduce motor vehicle taxes by approximately 20% to get us more in line with our neighbors. This is accomplished by revising the yearly fraction multipliers in law to better approximate a real depreciation schedule. Turning to handout 3, our current fractions decrease about 10% per year after year 1. That's the blue line. Year 2 is 90%, year 3, 80%, year 3-- year, year 4, 70%, and so on. LB4-- LB714 adjusts these fractions to drop faster. Year 2 would be 80%, year 3, 60%, year 4, 50%, and so on. The DMV ran these through their database and the changes result in 18% to 20% savings, about \$70 million per year. Next, is a tax calculator handout. It's legal size and I'm not going to go through all these numbers. But our current motor vehicle taxation is very discouraging for late-model car owners. I believe many Nebraskans would be excited to hear about a decrease in their motor vehicle taxes. If you look at the second row of items and look at \$35,000 new vehicle, it's the second \$35,000 you'll see, and over to the far right shows \$3,000 in the green shaded area, \$3,445 is the total taxes paid over 13 years, currently. Then the lower section, below the dark black line, it shows what LB714 would propose in yearly taxes. So the first section would show the new yearly taxes for a 30-- for the \$35,000. And then the next section down is the yearly savings over that current, and the bottom section is the total savings over the 13 years. If you look at the bottom-- third line from the bottom, the \$35,000 vehicle, the green shaded area, so \$684 savings over 13

years, which is 20% savings of the current rates. Next, if you turn to handout 5, LB714 also modifies the distribution of this revenue, increasing the county share from 22% to 40%, generating about \$37 million for counties statewide. That is shown on the third line from the bottom, labeled all counties, the far right, \$37 million, which I plan to use to replace inheritance tax reductions. The school funding share from motor vehicle taxes would decrease from 60% to 37%, a reduction of \$101 million, the fourth line from the bottom, far right, in red. At least half of this reduction would be offset for equalized schools through the TEEOSA formula. I plan to introduce an interim study to explore options for replacing any school revenue loss. LB714 will roughly double motor vehicle fees to produce approximately \$20 million in new revenue for counties, again, intended to replace inheritance tax cuts. This new revenue will continue to be designated for roads and bridges. I believe this is an appropriate use of any increase in motor vehicle fees. Even with this increase, the bill will produce an overall cut to total, total motor vehicle taxes and fees of 12% as compared to current levels. Currently, all trucks over 7 tons pay the same motor vehicle fee. So in addition to increasing their license fee, LB714 adds a fee of \$2 for every ton above 7 tons. This is reasonable because it has been shown that high-weight vehicles caused the most roadway damage and the damage is worse the heavier they are. For comparison, motor vehicle registration fees, which go exclusively to the State Highway Fund, increased by \$25 per ton above 7 tons. My change follows the fee-for-damage model already established with registration fees, but now would apply at the county and city level. Turning to handout 6, I am planning an update to the bill to modify the motor vehicle taxes disburse-- disbursements rates for Omaha-- city of Omaha and Douglas County. They are a special case in our current law, and we need to adjust the balance between city and county to hold the city of Omaha harmless. Currently, the bill has 25% for city of Omaha and Douglas County at 38%. The handout 6 shows the-- increasing Omaha to 28%, decreasing Douglas County to 35% to hold city of Omaha harmless. Douglas County would still profit greatly from the provisions in the bill. LB714 offers a balanced and adaptable solution that provides counties with a total of \$57 million estimated replacement revenue if inheritance tax is reduced and personal property tax relief for citizens through a motor vehicle tax cut while providing added funds for county and city roads and bridges. I would be happy to work with the committee to address any concerns. I don't expect the bill to move out of committee this year since there are not enough state funds to backfill the reduction proposed for schools. An interim study should help refine the bill. I'm happy to answer any questions at this time.

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**MOSER:** Senator DeBoer.

**DeBOER:** Thank you. Thank you, Senator Clements. So-- and thank you for the, the thorough handouts. If we are overall charging less to our population by having lower overall vehicle taxes, and we are going to somehow, in the same bill, create more money for counties, then it's going to have an effect on our general funds through TEEOSA. You said \$105 million or something like that.

**CLEMENTS:** 101. Yes.

**DeBOER:** 101. And then half of that at least would be offset through equalization. So that's \$50 million more that we would have to find for TEEOSA. So this is, at minimum, a \$50 million bill for the general funds, right?

**CLEMENTS:** Yes, and that's why I don't expect it to move this year. The other bill I have regarding inheritance tax, I found enough revenue to replace the provisions in it for, for counties and the, the counties tell me that they would not accept just a straight appropriations from the state of \$57 million because it's too easy to discontinue that, so I've worked with the counties looking for something that would be a more permanent revenue that every county gets. Every county licenses vehicles. But-- and then through the school funding, the idea is what the schools are reduced the state would backfill so we don't lose state aid to schools.

**DeBOER:** But we would have to find the other \$50 million, as well, in order to hold the schools whole. So what we're doing is basically shifting money off of auto taxes onto sales and income tax, essentially.

**CLEMENTS:** Yes.

**DeBOER:** OK. Thank you.

**MOSER:** Senator Storer.

**STORER:** Thank you, Chairman Moser. And thank you, Senator Clements. A couple questions, I guess, following kind of on the same track of Senator DeBoer's question. So currently-- and I should know the answer to this, but I don't think I do-- the-- currently, the, the percentage that you want to reallocate to schools, is that going directly to schools by district or is that currently state going into our TEEOSA funding? That's going directly to school districts, right?

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**CLEMENTS:** The motor vehicle tax is collected by the county and distributed to the school where that person resides.

**STORER:** OK.

**CLEMENTS:** Yes.

**STORER:** So that being said, the-- for those schools that are not equalized, what is the proposal to, to backfill those-- the dollars that they lose through this reallocation from the school to the county?

**CLEMENTS:** That's why I'm doing an interim study--

**STORER:** OK.

**CLEMENTS:** --how to actually hold schools harmless. It would take a, a formula to adjust for that.

**STORER:** OK, but you probably have a vision-- I mean, envision that somehow be built into the TEEOSA formula. I mean, that would, that would ultimately have to come through state funding. You would--

**CLEMENTS:** Yes.

**STORER:** Is that the intent?

**CLEMENTS:** But I, I haven't worked on that, the replacement part. I just wanted to get this as a starting point, and then we will only be able to move forward with this bill once we have a, a bill for replacing school funding.

**STORER:** Thank you.

**MOSER:** So if we take away funding for the schools, it's not just going to be the currently equalized schools. A lot of other schools are going to have to be equalized now, too, because they're not going to have as much-- not as many resources, and so reducing that is going to qualify them for more TEEOSA.

**CLEMENTS:** Right. The mix between equalized and nonequalized I haven't looked into how to fill the gaps for both classes of schools, but that's what the interim study will look into.

**MOSER:** I, I really don't have a lot of constituents clamoring about car tax because you can buy a car or you can drive an old one. Property tax is kind of where their focus is on and said to just

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unilaterally reduce car taxes, because-- I don't know why. It's your dream, I guess, but why, why do that and create more problems for ourselves? For-- and for one thing, cars still have value after 14 years. I mean, I've got cars older than 14 years. I'm paying almost nothing for tax on my old car.

**CLEMENTS:** Well--

**MOSER:** Why wouldn't you have a minimum tax on those cars 14 years and up and help offset that?

**CLEMENTS:** If you look at item-- handout number 3, the blue line, current line goes to zero. The red line stops at 1% of the base. And it, it does. I do-- I didn't-- I probably should have had that in my opening, but--

**MOSER:** But--

**CLEMENTS:** I, I do--

**MOSER:** 1% of a \$35,000 car would be what, \$350?

**CLEMENTS:** No. It's. Look at the base ta-- 1% of the base tax. The base tax is \$580. You start with what your first year tax is. It would be 1% of the \$580, which would be \$5 and--

**MOSER:** Oh, so you'd have \$50?

**CLEMENTS:** --\$5.80.

**MOSER:** Oh, \$5.

**CLEMENTS:** Right. But I-- yeah. We did-- in researching this, we saw that there are a million cars aged 14 and up on the road, not paying any motor vehicle tax.

**MOSER:** And they're still--

**CLEMENTS:** And so--

**MOSER:** --causing wear to the roads, and--

**CLEMENTS:** But the, the reason for the 1% is that if we make it much higher, then, then the 13th year is going to be lower, then the 14th year is going to increase.

**MOSER:** Well, you might have to bump the whole car up though.



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**CLEMENTS:** I did put this in because-- yes, I did. I agree that 14-year-old cars are still wearing the roads down and it should be some tax to pay it in the future, but I didn't want to put a large amount in.

**MOSER:** Yeah, it seems to me like you're giving away quite a bit here to gain what? Reducing inheritance tax?

**CLEMENTS:** Yes.

**MOSER:** Do you get a lot of complaints about the inheritance tax?

**CLEMENTS:** Well, we're losing some people because of it. No, not a lot, I would say. But its--

**MOSER:** If you have property in Nebraska and you die somewhere else, you still have to pay the tax, right?

**CLEMENTS:** Yes.

**MOSER:** So they can't die-- they can't move out of state to beat it. They gotta--

**CLEMENTS:** Unless you put it in a corporation and all you have is stock, then that's exempt, though there is a, a way around it for a nonresident.

**MOSER:** But then you got a messy trust to deal with.

**CLEMENTS:** Possibly.

**MOSER:** Yeah.

**CLEMENTS:** Yes.

**MOSER:** OK. Thank you. I was hoping you were going to testify for Ballard's bill. I saw you come in. I was all excited. All right. Thank you. Anybody to speak in support of LB714?

**CANDACE MEREDITH:** Good afternoon. Candace Meredith, C-a-n-d-a-c-e M-e-r-e-d-i-t-h, and I'm with the Nebraska Association of County Officials. Thank you, Senator Clements, for bringing LB714. Just quickly, just wanted to go and to say we, we support the, the concept of just basically reviewing the motor vehicle tax and fee structure. There's again, a lot. If you look at your pink slip, there is a lot of fees, a lot of different types of registration fees or buckets of money that go, and so it would be nice to take a look at that overall.

And again, this goes-- kind of go back to the inheritance tax study that the NACO did this summer with a group of stakeholders that we did look at motor vehicle tax as a possible revenue place-- replacement or basically diversification of our revenue. When you look at motor vehicle taxes, so basically how it sits right now is for our motor vehicle taxes in 2024, counties collected \$341 million. We do keep 1% for commissions. Then after that, the allocation is split. 60% goes to the schools, 22% goes to the counties, and then 18% will go to that city or, or municipality in that district. And so once that's split-- but then-- so the counties are receiving a smaller portion for those services. So when we're looking at these taxes, they were once, you know-- this is a-- basically from years ago, before my time. This was the property tax. And so it was something that was worked out when we went over to a motor vehicle tax structure that the schools would receive that property tax. So we are sensitive to the fact of the tax shift in this bill, so that's why the-- we would welcome that interim study. We would love to work on the whole-- beyond the motor vehicle taxes, but the motor vehicle fees themselves, as well, going forward. And then also, as Senator Clements did mention, there is over a million cars right now that are not-- we are not collecting motor vehicle taxes on. So that is something that we would like to also take a look at, as well as exemptions on motor vehicles.

**MOSER:** OK. Questions from the committee? Wow. No questions.

**CANDACE MEREDITH:** Thank you.

**MOSER:** More supporters for LB714. All right. Is there opposition for LB714? Welcome.

**KYLE FAIRBAIRN:** Chairman Moser, members of the committee, my name is Kyle Fairbairn, K-y-l-e F-a-i-r-b-a-i-r-n. I represent the Greater Nebraska Schools Association, GNSA. Our organization represents 25 of the largest school districts in the state, and those school districts educate about 80-- 70% of all the children in the state. I come today in opposition of LB714. The bill would redistribute the taxes collected on motor vehicles. I understand the intent of the language, which is to reduce the inheritance tax problems within the county governments and get a-- and get their-- that's how they get their funding, but this bill would have a tremendous consequences on the funding currently going to public schools. These are increases built into the law, but also some decreases. So overall, we're not sure how the, how the bill would work out as far as how the money comes apart. But in 2020-- 20-- '23-24, school districts across the state received license fees, fees of nearly \$200 million. This bill has the potential

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to lessen that amount to school districts by over \$45 million. This would have an effect-- a different effect for schools that are equalized and nonequalized. The equalized school districts would hope to make that money up through the TEEOSA formula. The unequalized school districts-- this has been brought up-- would have to rely on property taxes or cut programs to be able to fund their, fund their loss in, in this, this revenue. I appreciate Senator Clements wanting to do a study. We'd love to be involved in that. But these-- with these funding issues, GNSA is opposed to this language and we hope that you do not advance LB714. Be happy to answer any questions.

**MOSER:** I guess I have one. So equalized schools would see an increase in their TEEOSA funds, right?

**KYLE FAIRBAIRN:** That's correct, Chairman.

**MOSER:** But some of the schools are so far from being equalized that even this loss is not going to be enough for them to get TEEOSA.

**KYLE FAIRBAIRN:** It won't have any effect at all, Chairman. No, there's so much--

**MOSER:** No positive effect on their TEEOSA.

**KYLE FAIRBAIRN:** No positive effect. Yes. They just would be out the money. So again, they would be left with 2 choices. Either raise property taxes because that's where they get their funding from or drop programs. There would be no, there would be no way to make that money up.

**MOSER:** OK. Other questions? Thank you very much for your--

**KYLE FAIRBAIRN:** Thank you.

**MOSER:** --testimony. Is there other opposition? Welcome.

**LIZ STANDISH:** Thank you. Good afternoon. My name, my name is Liz Standish, spelled L-i-z S-t-a-n-d-i-s-h, and I'm the associate superintendent for business affairs for Lincoln Public Schools. And I'm here today to offer testimony in opposition to LB714. Greatly appreciate Senator Clements opening testimony that he understands this issue needs further study on the implication for school districts, and we're happy to be a resource to provide information. I just wanted to come today to talk about how this would work for school districts, specifically the first 2 years. Because while it is true that after 2 years, equalized school districts would receive additional state aid

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under TEEOSA, it will take 2 years for that to happen. And the reason for that is, for example, the TEEOSA aid that's being certified this month is from our annual financial report from 2 years ago. So there's a significant lag between the data set that is used for calculating state aid and when a law would be put in place. So, for example, Lincoln Public Schools would be short \$9 million each year for 2 years. And we would have to look at the property tax cap calculation and give school districts more property tax authority under that calculation and more levy authority. So this really would need to be a shift to property taxes for all school districts in the state for at least 2 years, and then it would be true that equalized school districts, that it would shift to sales and income tax through the TEEOSA formula. So we just wanted to make sure that the committee understood that there was a 2-year lag. I know Senator DeBoer is pretty briefed on school finance and probably knew that, but wanted to just bring that forward this afternoon, and I'd be happy to answer any questions you may have.

**MOSER:** How many schools in Lincoln are equalized?

**LIZ STANDISH:** So Lincoln Public Schools is not equalized.

**MOSER:** You have enough resources?

**LIZ STANDISH:** We, we are equalized. But there are other Lancaster County schools that are not equalized.

**MOSER:** Oh, OK.

**LIZ STANDISH:** But Lincoln Public Schools is equalized. Sorry. I misspoke, Senator.

**MOSER:** Yeah. Yeah.

**LIZ STANDISH:** Yeah.

**MOSER:** Or I asked the wrong question.

**LIZ STANDISH:** No, I, I think I misspoke.

**MOSER:** You know what I meant.

**LIZ STANDISH:** But we are currently equalized. Yes.

**MOSER:** Yeah. But that still would cost the state to make up that revenue.

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**LIZ STANDISH:** Correct. Yeah.

**MOSER:** OK. Other questions from committee members. I guess thank you--

**LIZ STANDISH:** Yeah.

**MOSER:** --very much for your testimony.

**LIZ STANDISH:** Thank you.

**MOSER:** More opposition? Welcome.

**HEATHER SHEPARD:** Thank you. Senator Moser and members of the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee, my name is Heather Shepard, H-e-a-t-h-e-r S-h-e-p-a-r-d. I am currently the chief financial officer for Elkhorn Public Schools, and I'm honored to provide testimony today in opposition to LB714 on behalf of Elkhorn Public Schools and on behalf of the Nebraska Council of School Administrators. LB714 does reduce a stable source of funding for schools. The purpose of this bill is to increase funding to cities and counties for roads, but it is shifting funding away from schools. The bill in its present form does not provide an offset for schools that rely on this funding. School districts rely on stable funding sources to offset changes and other funding mechanisms that fluctuate from year to year. For growing school districts like Elkhorn, it is even more crucial to have stable sources of funding that we can count on for budgeting purposes from one year to the next. Motor vehicle taxes is currently one of those sources of stable, stable funding that should increase with residential growth in the district and thus correlate with the increased educational costs for those schools in that same district. The current allocation of 60% for school districts generated more than \$9.94 million in motor vehicle tax income for Elkhorn Public Schools in the '23-24 school year. The allocation reduction proposed in LB714 would have reduced this amount for Elkhorn Public Schools by \$3.6 million. Every year, there are many proposed changes to the school funding in the Legislature, and often the impact of all of them combined is difficult to fully predict. To add another significant reduction in school funding from the motor vehicle tax is not healthy for Nebraska school district funding in Elkhorn Public Schools, especially with the major changes to school funding in the past 3 years. Over the past 2 years, as additional funds have been allocated through the school aid formula and special aid-- special education funding, we have reduced our general fund levy by \$0.32. This has translated into significant property tax relief for the patrons in our district. If approved, LB714 would shift that burden

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back to the Elkhorn taxpayers. I urge you not to advance LB714 in its present state due to the shift in funding which would be created for Elkhorn Public Schools and other nonequalized school districts in the state. I thank you for the opportunity to testify today, and I appreciate your willingness to serve the students and families in Nebraska. Any questions?

**MOSER:** Questions from committee members? Seeing none, thank you very much.

**HEATHER SHEPARD:** Thank you.

**MOSER:** More opposition? Seeing none, is there anyone to testify in the neutral? Welcome.

**LASH CHAFFIN:** Thank you. Good afternoon, Senator Moser, members of the committee. My name is Lash, L-a-s-h, Chaffin, C-h-a-f-f-i-n. I represent the League of Nebraska Municipalities. I just want to say that the portion of the motor vehicles tax that goes to municipal governments for road, road-- the road-- the statutory road issues is very, very important. And if the committee or Senator, Senator Clements goes forward with the study, we would love to be a part of that, that study. This is, this is a very important funding source for a very important municipal operation. I would certainly answer any questions.

**MOSER:** I guess seeing no questions, thank you.

**LASH CHAFFIN:** Thank you.

**MOSER:** You get bonus points for the shortest testimony.

**LASH CHAFFIN:** I haven't been hitting the light all year, so.

**MOSER:** Anybody else in the neutral? Seeing none, Senator Clements.

**CLEMENTS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The schools did advise me that they would be opposed, and that was not surprising because I've not worked on how to fund them. And the TEEOSA equalized, not equalized is an issue that we'll have to look into. But I'm-- for inheritance tax reduction, I'm needing revenue for every county, which motor vehicle tax, every county collects. And it, it would be-- it was the one area where I could find enough revenue for the purposes I'm looking for. Iowa ended their inheritance tax January of 2025, leaving us with-- the only partners with inheritance tax being Kentucky, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Maryland. And so, senior citizens especially, with

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no-- especially with no children are looking for ways to leave Nebraska. They don't want to be caught dead in Nebraska is a phrase I've heard. So for competition, attracting people to the state and keeping people in the state is why I think it's important. Nebraska is the only state that allocates inheritance tax to the counties. All the other ones, it just came into state revenues, and they could just quit collecting that and backfill it with state income tax or sales tax, and it was a lot easier for other states to do it. So this has been a, a real challenge trying to figure out how to work on this, but I, I want to thank the committee for your consideration.

**MOSER:** Thank you. Questions from committee members? Oh, seeing none, thank you very much.

**CLEMENTS:** Thank you, committee.

**MOSER:** That will end our hearing on LB714. We received 3 proponent letters, 7 opponent letters, and no neutral. Senator Dorn, welcome.

**DORN:** Welcome. Thank you. Thank you, much.

**DORN:** Ready?

**MOSER:** Yes, we're ready for you.

**DORN:** Good afternoon, members of the Transportation and Telecommunication Committee. My name is Myron Dorn, M-y-r-o-n D-o-r-n. I represent District 30, which is all of Gage County and the southeast portion of Lancaster County. Today, I'm introducing LB576, that makes a wireless 911 surcharge equal across all of Nebraska counties and makes it uniform with our landline 911 surcharge. It also affirms operational support for public service answering points through the 911 surcharge. In Nebraska, there are 67 911 public safety answering points, known as PSAPs, to help ensure uniform systems of call receiving and processing across our diverse terrain and constituents. PSAPS are funded with a 911 surcharge on landlines. With the majority of households now utilizing wireless services, the current funding based on landlines is dramatically reduced by 80% over the years. There's also a disparity of where and when those emergency calls are being made. Popular attractions such as Lake McConaughy or Calamus Reservoir, where local populations are small but during the peak summer months, they see call volumes surge. When the current funding of PSAPs falls short, the local property taxpayers must pick up this extra burden. Surrounding state wireless 911 surcharges, according to NENA, the National Emergency Number Association lists South Dakota at

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\$1.25, Iowa at \$1, Kansas at \$0.90, Missouri at 3% of the monthly bill, Colorado at \$0.70 with a, with a maximum of \$4. Wyoming at \$0.25, but it can go up to \$0.70. This bill does not automatically increase the rate. First, the bill makes the rate equal among all the counties with a maximum rate of \$1. Second, it gives the Public Service Commission the ability to raise the rate as necessary. As former, former Senator McDonnell, who introduced this proposal before, pointed out in his testimony, this approach to similar-- is similar to the telecommunication relay service which provides access to telecommunication services and equipment for individuals who are hearing and speech impaired or deaf and blind impaired. The Public Service Commission has the authority to charge up to \$0.20 per telephone line, but they certainly currently set the surcharge at \$0.03 because this has been sufficient to fully fund the relay systems. This is what LB576 proposes, by setting a top rate, but at a discretion of the Public Service Commission. This rate can only be used to fund the 911 PSAPs. The legislature must adjust the rate to adapt to changing environment of phone usage. This change will help ensure constituents' funding, but more importantly, ensure uniform public safety, safety communications throughout the state. I'd be happy to answer any questions.

**MOSER:** Questions from committee members? So currently, the plain old telephone copper cable connected phone lines are paying how much?

**DORN:** I'd, I'd have to ask. John Cannon, how much?

**MOSER:** Well, we'll, we'll---

**DORN:** I don't know. We'll have to, we'll have to find out for sure. My--

**MOSER:** But this is only for wireless?

**DORN:** The proposal is now to also include the wireless on it. Right now only the landlines are, are, are on it. And I don't know whether it's \$0.50 or \$0.75. I cannot tell you that for sure, but I know the-- all the state but Omaha is at a different rate.

**MOSER:** OK.

**DORN:** Omaha is a maximum of \$0.50 and the state-- the rest of the state is maximum is \$0.75. But maybe Senator DeBoer knows. Otherwise, I don't.

**MOSER:** Senator DeBoer.



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**DeBOER:** Well, I was going to ask you, is this-- so this is the McDonnell bill where he's trying to bring Douglas County or Omaha or whatever--

**DORN:** Yep. Yeah. Mm-hmm.

**DeBOER:** --up to the same level as everyone else. So that's-- but now it's going to be \$1 instead of \$0.75?

**DORN:** That's what the proposal is in this bill. This--

**DeBOER:** I'll ask. I'll wait and ask.

**DORN:** --Jon Cannon from NACO is going to be here later. It was by some of his people that they brought this to me. There are enough numbers going around, I don't always make sure I remember all the right ones. So instead of me answering and giving you a wrong one, we'll just wait for Jon to answer some of those questions.

**DeBOER:** I'll ask him.

**DORN:** Yeah.

**MOSER:** All right. Any other questions for Senator Dorn? Thank you very much for your testimony. Supporters for LB576? Welcome. Back again.

**JON CANNON:** Good afternoon, Chairman Moser, members of the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee. My name is Jon Cannon, J-o-n C-a-n-n-o-n. I am the executive director of the Nebraska Association of County Officials, also known as NACO, here to testify today in support of LB576. I certainly appreciate Senator Dorn bringing this bill on behalf of NACO. This is something that's bedeviled us for quite some time, actually. One of the fundamental questions about tax policy is who pays for what? And so, this is a, a, a question that we have answered here, which is we have wireless users that have a-- they, they pay a surcharge on their bill, and that funds our, our PSAPs, our public safety answering points. The question really also comes down to is it the local taxpayer that should pay for all of our PSAPs, or is it-- this a statewide concern? So a lot of times that, that we have something that's peculiarly local, we will pay for those through the property tax or other peculiarly local taxes, whereas those things that are statewide generally come from the state's General Fund and are funded through the state. We would submit that 911 is a statewide concern. There is certainly a desire for uniformity, and that's, that's reflected in all the statutes that we have that govern 911. But, you know, if you go to McConaughy or you go

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to Calamus or you go to Toadstool Geologic State Park, people expect 911 service and there are a lot of license plates when you go there that are not from the area. As a matter of fact, a lot of the-- you know, don't-- a lot of license plates that do not have county numbers on them. So a lot of folks that are coming from Lancaster, Sarpy, Douglas Counties, they're making use of the resources that our state has. And when folks go there, when they go to, to travel to all the great parts of our state, they expect to have consistent 911 service. And so, Senator Dorn had mentioned Calamus. A lot of people go up to Calamus, and, and that, that area is governed by what's called Region 26. That's the PSAP that's up there. Region 26 is made up of 8 counties. It's roughly-- and actually, I don't want to say it's roughly the size of the state of Connecticut. It is almost exactly the same size as the state of Connecticut, within like 0.2 square miles or something like that. And that area that's the size of the state of Connecticut has 8 squad cars and 3 dispatchers, and that's because it's borne by property taxes, primarily. Region 26 representatives could not be here. I handed out the folders that have their written testimony they wanted me to submit it for them. They send their regrets. Among the Region 26 board members would be NACO board president and Garfield County Commissioner Diana Hurlburt. She really, really wanted to be here, and she's very sad that she could not. This is like, as I mentioned before, one of NACO-- the NACO board's priorities for this session. I'm happy to take any questions you may have.

**MOSER:** We'll start with Senator DeBoer.

**DeBOER:** Thank you. Huh. So--

**JON CANNON:** I, I feel like I'm in the middle of something I don't want to be in the middle of.

**MOSER:** Well, we got started with her earlier, and we'll just continue.

**DeBOER:** I was-- so this is the bill that McDonnell had a couple years ago, that changes basically just my constituents to pay more. So they go up from, from the lower amount and up to the statewide number. Is that right?

**JON CANNON:** Yes, ma'am. Although, it-- what the bill provides is that right now, 92 counties in the state are paying \$0.70 and Douglas County is paying \$0.50. This would raise the surcharge to \$1 for everybody, so ev-- everyone's going to go up.

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**DeBOER:** And do you need that \$1? I mean, if you're moving the, the largest group of people, Omaha, from \$0.50 and you're going to double them, do you need all of that money to accomplish your goals?

**JON CANNON:** I, I think when it comes to the funding of public safety answering points, I, I would, I would say that we do. The fiscal note shows that it would yield \$1.2 million. And, and according-- under the language of the bill, it would be for the-- to maximize the operational capacity of PSAPs across the state. That's something where I, I believe the Public Service Commission would, would probably have a great deal of input as to exactly how that, that funding was apportioned out. But again, I'll, I'll refer back to my prior testimony that, you know, Nebraska is a-- I mean, there's a lot of great places to visit in Nebraska. And certainly, there's a lot of folks from Omaha that go to Lake McConaughy and have fun in the sun, go to Calamus Reservoir, which is beautiful. If you haven't had the opportunity, you should totally go, you know, and some of the other great resources we have across the state. And, and so saying that when those folks get in trouble, that the cost of getting them out of the ditch or, or bailing them out of whatever circumstance they find themselves in should be borne by the local taxpayer, that, that seems like a little much. And, and adding a, you know, \$0.50 onto the surcharge for someone's cell phone bill, I mean, I, I just paid 144 bucks for mine. I'm not, I'm not, I'm not going to notice \$1. And now, maybe I'm demonstrating some privilege that I don't want to, but it seems like if we're already at \$0.50, another \$0.50 on a, on a wireless bill isn't that much.

**DeBOER:** We have one of the highest taxes and fees rates on wired and wireless, especially wireless, in the country. I mean, I remember a bill a couple years ago that Senator Vargas had, and he had all the fees that we had and all the fees that everyone else-- I mean, maybe it's \$0.75 more, maybe it's \$0.50 more, maybe whatever it is, an extra \$1. I do think people notice that, and particularly, they notice it in the aggregate. Right?

**JON CANNON:** Well, I think, Senator-- and I appreciate the question. One of the things that, that when you're looking at tax policy, there's the, the concept of tax elasticity. And so as a tax increases, how much does the use of that service go down? Typically, you do not see that kind of elastic-- you do not see that kind of elasticity when it comes to a wireless surcharge. I, I think the studies from almost everyone-- every state around us has shown that, that as rates go up, the use of cell phones has not-- does-- has not correspondingly gone down.

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**DeBOER:** Well, that almost makes me more concerned, right, if you think about it that way, then it's almost like it's a public necessity. Right. And so, that means it's going to be any tax on a public necessity, something that's a need, is going to be inherently regressive.

**JON CANNON:** You know, that, that's a good point. And I guess I had not considered and we haven't really studied what the regressivity would, would be for something like that. I know that when it comes to me paying my cell phone bill, I, I, I, I think the cell phone bill overall is going to be pretty much the same for most people across the board. And so whether you've got a tax that is, you know, 1-- probably less than 1% and not, and not even a tax, and --I apologize. You have a fee that is less than 1% of the total bill. I-- I'm not sure how much that's going to affect the regressivity.

**DeBOER:** I'm going to let some of the others ask you questions.

**JON CANNON:** Yes, ma'am.

**MOSER:** Senator Fredrick-- Fredrickson.

**FREDRICKSON:** Thank you, Chair Moser. Well, thank you. Senator DeBoer stole my thunder a little bit. But-- so I, I, I-- look, I, I, I certainly appreciate the testimony you're saying about Nebraskans expecting reliable 911, regardless of where they are in the state. That's, that's an issue that we've seen with recent 911 outages, of course. But kind of piggybacking off of Senator DeBoer, I mean, what-- what's your sense in terms of what would the average Douglas County resident see as an increase in fee with this?

**JON CANNON:** So they would, they would go from-- and I, I don't know what the average cell phone bill in Douglas County would be, sir. But right now, they're paying \$0.50 as a surcharge on their wireless line--

**FREDRICKSON:** Right.

**JON CANNON:** --and they'd be paying \$1. And so, anyway, it would be a-- anyway. On-- for that surcharge alone, it would, it would be an increase of 100%. As compared to the remainder of the bill, however, it's going to be-- I've, I've got to assume it's going to be less than 1%. I, I, I just paid my cell phone bill this morning.

**FREDRICKSON:** Yep.

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**JON CANNON:** If it was \$0.50-- well, actually, I paid \$0.70 as a wireless surcharge. If that went up to \$1, I-- that's, that's negligible as far as-- as compared to my bill.

**FREDRICKSON:** Right. And that's, and that's per month, right? So it would be like a \$0.50 increase approximately.

**JON CANNON:** Yes, sir.

**FREDRICKSON:** OK. That's helpful. Thank you.

**JON CANNON:** Yep. Thank you.

**MOSER:** Senator Bosn.

**BOSN:** Thank you. Mr. Cannon, do you know why Douglas County collects less than all the rest of the state?

**JON CANNON:** I, I do not know for sure. I could speculate, which is perhaps inherently dangerous, dangerous. But my, my expectation is that because of the volume of people that live in Douglas County, the thought is they're going to be contributing to, you know, a, a proportionately higher amount to the statewide PSAP system, given the volume of calls that they're already experiencing. However, I don't want to get too far out over the tips of my skis. And so, if-- I, I, I believe the Public Safety Commission-- or Public Service Commission is going to be here to testify. They may know that. I, I would only be speculating.

**BOSN:** So-- but this bill doesn't include a surplus on Douglas County to compensate for the beneficial \$0.20 they've received thus far, up until this bill has been presented.

**JON CANNON:** No.

**BOSN:** So it's not like they're going to \$1.20 to make up for the benefit they've received thus far. They're just being placed on a level playing field with the rest of the state.

**MOSER:** Wow.

**BOSN:** Is that true?

**JON CANNON:** Yes, ma'am.

**BOSN:** OK.

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**JON CANNON:** I, I have, I have something new to contemplate now, ma'am. Thank you.

**MOSER:** Are the wired line charges the same as wireless?

**JON CANNON:** I believe so, sir. I, I, I think they're currently at a-- I, I, I think they're currently at \$1. And this would move wireless up, up to a-- on a par with them.

**MOSER:** I can kind of recall the discussion we had on wireless surcharges. And I-- as I recall, Senator Chambers was involved in the discussion. I'd have to go back and research it, but I think that may be one of the reasons that theirs is less than some of the others.

**JON CANNON:** Yeah. And, and one thing-- and, and I appreciate you mentioning that, Senator Moser, because one of the things I would, would add to that is that counties are, are creatures of the state. And so anytime that, that we want to raise our own fees like such as for marriage licenses, for any of the other fees that we charge, like service of process or anything like that, that has to become-- that has come through statute, and, and it's much the same here. We don't get to decide, hey, you know what? I'm in Thomas County and, and we've been, been responding to a lot of 911 calls for people from Omaha, Lincoln, or wherever. We need to-- we need-- we can raise our-- the wireless rate for the people in Thomas County or in Region 26. That is determined solely by the state.

**MOSER:** There's no way to charge the people from Colorado that come to visit McConaughy or Calamus.

**JON CANNON:** Well, I-- you know, one thing that you could do is you could have something-- you could have a tax along the Interstate corridor.

**MOSER:** Build a canal into Colorado.

**JON CANNON:** Well, that'd be kind of cool. You could have, like a, a, a tax along an Interstate corridor that would capture wealth from people that are traveling through the state that aren't going to notice it otherwise. But other than that, I, I, I think that you would have to find a alternate means of revenue to capture the folks from Colorado.

**MOSER:** How much revenue is this going to raise?

**JON CANNON:** I think the fiscal note says \$1.2 million, sir.

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**MOSER:** And who's going to decide how that gets divided?

**JON CANNON:** I think that goes through the Public Service Commission. They have to maximize the operational efficiency of, of PSAPs throughout the state.

**MOSER:** OK. Any other-- yes. Senator Storer.

**STORER:** Thank you, Chairman Moser. Mr. Cannon, do we know about how much-- I'm just-- common sense tells me that the overall amount collected from our landlines is going down every year--

**JON CANNON:** Yes, ma'am.

**STORER:** --as more people no longer have a land line. Is there-- do, do you have any idea what the total number collected is? Like, is this going to just really help offset that?

**JON CANNON:** I, I don't know the answer to that, ma'am.

**STORER:** OK.

**JON CANNON:** I apologize.

**STORER:** I would, I would be curious if that information is available to just kind of look at the total dollars. And, you know, if we're just kind of trying to keep this at par, honestly--

**JON CANNON:** Sure.

**STORER:** --with, with what's been collected in the past from landlines, as we continue to lose landlines.

**JON CANNON:** Well, I'll make a note of that, ma'am, and if we can find that information, I'll make sure we, we furnish it to the committee.

**STORER:** Thank you.

**JON CANNON:** Yes, ma'am.

**MOSER:** Any other questions? All right. Thank you very much.

**JON CANNON:** Thank you very much. Have a great day.

**MOSER:** Anybody else to speak in support? Welcome.

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**MICHEAL DWYER:** Thank you. Welcome and good afternoon, Chairman Moser, Moser-- excuse me-- and members of the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee. My name is Micheal Dwyer, M-i-c-h-e-a-l D-w-y-e-r, and I appreciate the opportunity to testify in support of LB576 to maximize operational support for public safety in Nebraska. Thank you to Senator Dorn for this important legislation. I'm a 40-year veteran of fire-- Volunteer Fire and EMS with a resume of nearly 2,800 calls, author, author of the fourth version of the Future of EMS in Nebraska Report, and I'm co-chair of the Nebraska EMS Task Force. I'm testifying on behalf of the Nebraska State Volunteer Firefighters Association, Association, of which I'm a 22 member of the legislative committee, and also on behalf of the Nebraska Fire Chiefs Association. PSAPs, public service answering points are the first contact for the first line of protection for care of Nebraskans. Everything that happens in law enforcement, fire, and EMS and emergency management runs through a PSAP. Everything from the initial call to our final in-service radio transmission requires excellent communication, and the center of that is a human being on a radio console in a PSAP. Those humans need to be paid, and that technology needs to be the best available or people on a scene during an emergency will suffer. Response will be delayed and decisions will be misunderstood. When communication works, everyone functions more effectively. When it doesn't, lives of citizens, patients, and first responders are at risk. One of the pieces of dispatch that EMS is particularly interested, particularly myself, is EMD, emergency medical dispatch. EMD is the system with training and technology that helps dispatchers triage medical calls on both ends of the spectrum. On the top end, being able to quickly recognize a true medical emergency and direct care such as bystander CPR over the phone and dispatch advanced life support, even a medical helicopter, quickly saves lives when minutes matter. On the other end, EMD is being used to effectively direct non-emergent patients to other services, saving vital response to more critical patients. Statistically, only about 8% of EMS are-- EMS calls are truly life-threatening. Calls for list asift-- lift assist, false medical alert alarms, unknown ailments, and my own stories of emergency mosquito bites can account for as much as 30% of call volume, and are significantly taxing the EMS system across the country, and EMD can help with that. But EMT-- EMD takes money, money for training, staffing, and technology. Given that fire, EMS, and law enforcement are all inter-jurisdictional, it only seems logical that funding that is broader than a single county should be in place. LB576 and the increase in cellular charges is a fair and reasonable tool. And I believe that that-- I would encourage you to advance LB576 to General File. Finally and respectfully, I would



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remind the committee that of all of the billions in dollars-- billions of dollars that the Legislature is charged to spend, public safety is the most important responsibility that you have. Thank you, and I would be happy to take any questions.

**MOSER:** Questions? Seeing none, thank you for your testimony.

**MICHEAL DWYER:** Thank you.

**MOSER:** Anyone else here to speak in support of LB576? Greetings. Welcome.

**JEREMY McCOY:** Thank you. Hello. My name is Jeremy McCoy. Members of the Transportation and Telecommission-- Telecommunication Committee, thank you for your time today. I am the-- I'm sorry. Last name McCoy, M-c-C-o-y. I am the sheriff of Hamilton County, and I'm testifying today in support of LB576 and increasing the financial support for the statewide public safety answering points. Our dispatch center provides services for Hamilton and Merrick Counties, and we have faced increasing costs associated with the day-to-day operations of our center. Our call recording software maintenance agreement has increased 10% since 2022. Our dispatch software agreement has increased 11% since 2022. The amount we pay to access the statewide NRIN system has increased 28% just last year. The 9-- E-911 mapping software yearly maintenance costs have increased 42% since 2021. And in order to keep existing personnel and attract new employees to these difficult jobs, our wages have increased 39% since 2020. The total increase is \$98,000 per year since 2022. Additionally, the funds we collect over-- on our 911 landline fees continue to decrease every year, as more and more individuals cancel their landlines. We've also been tasked with additional certifications required by the Public Service Commission, without additional funding for the 911 centers. This includes the emergency medical dispatch you just heard about, as well as the 40-hour basic telecommunications certification for each of our dispatchers. This proposed increase in wireless surcharge would allow the Public Service Commission to increase funding to our public safety answering points across the state to assist with the increased costs associated with maintaining the system that answers the 911 calls. Thank you very much. I'd be willing to answer any questions now, and I do have some hard numbers on what that looks like for our, our dispatch center.

**MOSER:** All right. Questions from committee members? Senator Fredrickson.

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**FREDRICKSON:** Thank you, Chair Moser. Thank you, Sheriff, for being here and taking time to testify.

**JEREMY McCOY:** Yep.

**FREDRICKSON:** Can you share your hard numbers?

**JEREMY McCOY:** Yep. So every year, our dispatch center, currently, our budget is over \$0.5 million. The support we receive from cell phone surcharge is \$58,000. So it is a-- it's not a, it's not a big portion.

**FREDRICKSON:** No.

**JEREMY McCOY:** Our 911 fees that we collect is 40,000. So, so we have less than 20% of our costs are covered by 911 fees or E-911 fees.

**FREDRICKSON:** Got it, got it.

**JEREMY McCOY:** So a majority of that is covered through property taxes.

**FREDRICKSON:** And this would shift that a little bit more to-- yeah.

**JEREMY McCOY:** Quite frankly, \$1.3 million between 67 PSAPs--

**FREDRICKSON:** Yeah.

**JEREMY McCOY:** --is not going to go very far for each of us.

**FREDRICKSON:** Yeah.

**JEREMY McCOY:** It, it'll help.

**FREDRICKSON:** Yep. Yep. Thank you.

**MOSER:** Other comments? Senator Storer.

**STORER:** Thank you. Chairman Moser. Do you have any idea on numbers, how, how much we've lost in landline fees?

**JEREMY McCOY:** Since 2020, I've lost \$20,000 per year. Sorry. \$20,000 total between 2020 and 2024.

**STORER:** So just in the last 4 years.

**JEREMY McCOY:** In the last 4 years.

**STORER:** So would this increase-- make-- just kind of make up for that? I mean, is this just going to--

**JEREMY McCOY:** It--

**STORER:** --get you back to whole?

**JEREMY McCOY:** It would probably not get us back to whole. No.

**STORER:** OK.

**JEREMY McCOY:** Like I said, we only get \$60,000-- \$58,000 a year from the PSC. And we get \$40,000 currently from 911 landlines.

**STORER:** So this probably-- I mean, I'm-- and I asked--

**JEREMY McCOY:** It's going to make up a little bit.

**STORER:** --the previous testifier that. I would be very-- I'm very interested to see sort of what this does in relationship to the, to the whole ship. You know what I mean, for what we've--

**JEREMY McCOY:** Yes. And those 911 fees come directly to the county. They do not go to the Public Service Commission, whereas these fees go to Public, Public Service Commission.

**STORER:** That's right.

**MOSER:** How many calls do you get at your PSAP? Well, first of all, how big an area do, do you dispatch?

**JEREMY McCOY:** Merrick and Hamilton Counties, which does include the Interstate going through Hamilton County.

**MOSER:** That's Grand Island?

**JEREMY McCOY:** We are just east of Grand Island. It's Aurora and Central City. They're the city-- county seats.

**MOSER:** OK. And so how many calls do you get?

**JEREMY McCOY:** Over the weekend, the 3-day weekend, we got 100 calls.

**MOSER:** It's a lot of money per call.

**JEREMY McCOY:** Yes, but we are staffed 24 hours a day. So.

**MOSER:** Well. And everybody that calls has a problem.

**JEREMY McCOY:** Yes.

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**MOSER:** And they need help. Other questions? Thank you very much.

**JEREMY McCOY:** Thank you for your time.

**MOSER:** Anybody else in support? Welcome.

**LASH CHAFFIN:** Thank you. Good afternoon, Senator Moser, members of the committee. My name is Lash, L-a-s-h, Chaffin, C-h-a-f-f-i-n, and I would offer the support of the League of Nebraska Municipalities for LB576. And I'd like to thank Senator Dorn for bringing this forward. The, the, the ongoing transition from the old copper line 911 system to the digital, digital enhanced 911 system is just been a fascinating study of, of, of government change. And it's, it's something that-- I don't think I realized how complex it was until they made the mistake of putting me on a, a committee, and so I got to ask a lot of questions. And-- but it's, it's, it's something that's very important and, and I, I, I hope Nebraska continue the same pace that we've made to, to move forward into a system where, now, people can shoot cameras and pictures and run those in through the 911 system and do all kinds of fancy stuff. Literally, just a few years ago, that was impossible. That, that could not be done. And it's just been a fascinating process. I know this committee has been briefed on that, on that progress a couple times. And I would encourage you to, to continue to, if you're new to the committee, to try to get as much information as you can. But, but I would certainly answer any questions.

**MOSER:** Questions from committee members? OK. Seeing none, thank you.

**LASH CHAFFIN:** Thank you.

**MOSER:** Is there more supporter testimony? Seeing none, is there any opposition testimony? Welcome.

**CHRIS PETERSON:** Chairman Moser and members of the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee. My name is Chris Peterson, C-h-r-i-s P-e-t-e-r-s-o-n, and I'm a registered lobbyist, today testifying on behalf of CTIA, the trade association for the wireless communications industry, and testifying in opposition to LB576, which would significantly increase 911 fees for Nebraska wireless consumers. The wireless industry fully supports and partners with Nebraska public safety providers, including providing interoperable services in support of public safety efforts. While we support the legislation's goals of supporting public safety, we believe it is necessary to share with you our concerns on behalf of our wireless customers, who will bear the brunt of the tax increases in the proposed legislation. LB576

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looks to increase the statewide 911 tax on wireless, landline, landline and VoIP telephone lines to a dollar per month. This would be a 43% increase from the current \$0.70 statewide 911 cap that applies today in most of the state and would double the rate in Omaha. This comes on the heels of a \$0.20 increase in the 911 fee that began 3 years ago. Nebraskans already pay the fifth highest wireless taxes and fees in the country, with an estimated 18.3% on state and local taxes and fees, and over 30% combined federal and state taxes and fees on their phone bills. This legislation would make a bad situation even worse. Several states in recent years have appropriated general funds to help supplement funding to the 911 program rather than increase end user fees, and we encourage Nebraska to consider doing the same. When added to the USF surcharge of \$1.75 per month and the telecommunications relay service surcharge of \$0.05 per month, the proposed 911 fee would increase would put Nebraska third highest among the states in terms of flat fees. As you know, flat rate fees are very regressive, imposing a proportionately higher burden on low-income people, especially families with multi-line, line plans. Wireless phones are the gateway to the internet for many broadband consumers, so overburdening these consumers with much higher fees would burden Nebraska families at a time when wireless connectivity is more important than ever for safety and economic security. Any 911 tax should be kept as low as possible and justified by data showing exactly what the tax would fund. If funding is needed for equipment or one-time system upgrades, these funding needs should be brought to the Legislature to determine the needs before an increase of the fee is contemplated. The goal should be to provide citizens with efficient communications-- efficient emergency communication services, but to do so in a way that is-- that does not further exasperate the current tax and fee burden on wireless consumers. This legislation is particularly important to our industry, as wireless consumers currently pay more than 70% of all 911 fees in the state. Therefore, CTIA and our members are committed to ensuring that fees are kept as low as possible. As you examine your 911 statute, the goal should be to provide citizens with efficient emergency communication services, but to do so in a way that recognizes the impact in taxes and-- of taxes and fees on wireless consumers.

**MOSER:** Questions from committee members? How are transplants taxed? So if I move from another state and I have a cell phone number and I pay my cell phone bill out of state, but I move to Nebraska. It works in Nebraska, just like I'm in Chicago or wherever I came from. Is there any way to make up for that slippage?

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**CHRIS PETERSON:** Mr. Chairman, I will get out on a bit of a limb. Assuming that you change your billing address, then presumably at that point, the, the taxes and fees would follow.

**MOSER:** Tax might follow you. Well, maybe it would be advantageous to leave your bill in Chicago or wherever. OK. Other questions? Thank you very much for your testimony.

**CHRIS PETERSON:** Thank you.

**MOSER:** Any other opposition testimony? Seeing none, is there anyone in the neutral? Welcome.

**TIM SCHRAM:** Good afternoon, Chair Moser and members of the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee. I am Tim Schram, T-i-m S-c-h-r-a-m. I represent the third district for the Nebraska Public Service Commission. I'm here today on behalf of the Commission to provide neutral testimony on LB576. The Public Service Commission is a statewide authority that implements, coordinates, manages, maintains, and provides funding assistance to the 911 service system. There are 67 locally-operated 911 centers in Nebraska, also known as public safety answering points, or PSAPs. All Nebraska PSAPs operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and last year, answering over 941,000 911 calls from Nebraska residents and visitors seeking emergency assistance. Nebraska's PSAPs are as varied as our state. Last year, our state's largest PSAP answered on average more than 1,300 911 calls per day. On the other hand, there are 41 PSAPs that each receive fewer than 10 911 calls per day. As directed by the Legislature and the 911 Service System Act, the Public Service Commission is implementing a statewide plan to transition the Nebraska 911 system from legacy copper wire technology to Next Generation 911 communication technology, which provides increased reliability, redundancy, and the ability to locate callers using geographic information systems mapping data. To date, all 67 PSAPs are connected to the state's Next Generation 911 system. After funding costs of the statewide Next Generation 911 system and maintaining a reasonable contingency reserve, the remaining 911 surcharge funds collected annually by the Commission are distributed directly to the PSAPs. Therefore, under the wireless surcharge caps currently in statute during the 2024-2025 fiscal year, the Commission is allocating over \$5.8 million to the 67 Nebraska PSAPs. The monthly wireless 911 surcharge is currently set by a Commission order to the maximum amount allowed by statute at \$0.70 per wireless line for residents in all counties except Douglas County, where the rate is limited by statute to \$0.50 per wireless line per month. LB576 would authorize the Commission to increase the current

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surcharge rates for all PSAPs, including Douglas County, to \$1. However, surcharge rates would remain as is unless the Commission chose to increase the current rates. As you can see from the fiscal note, if the Commission were to raise Douglas County surcharge to be in parity with the rest of the state and therefore raise Douglas County surcharge to \$0.70, an additional \$1.2 million could potentially be added to the fund. Every year, the Commission reviews revenue, expenses, consults with the 911 Service System Advisory Committee, and conducts an annual hearing to determine the surcharge rate for each calendar year. We thank Senator Dorn for his support of 911. We also thank the committee for its time, and I'd be happy to answer any questions.

**MOSER:** Questions from committee members? Seeing none, thank you very much.

**TIM SCHRAM:** Thank you.

**MOSER:** Anybody else to testify in the neutral? All right. Senator Dorn, you want to offer some closing comments?

**DORN:** Thank you very much. Thank you for the hearing today. I appreciate this very much. Part of why I brought LB576 was, as many of you know, I've been a county commissioner for years, and some of the costs of some of the 911 centers and what's going on with all those, and keep up with technology, that's an ever-increasing cost. Another part, why I brought the bill and asked for a surcharge was because of the deficit we have going on. And I don't know, maybe Senator Clements, did he ask you for money or did he come with a funding bill or something when he was here before? We, we have a hard time-- we will have a hard time getting any funding because of our deficit and other things going on, so that's why we brought about in this surcharge rate, which, to answer Senator Bosn's question, I don't-- I couldn't hear what he gave you for an answer why some was at why Omaha was \$0.50 and the rest was \$0.70. Talking to the people I've talked to, they tell me that, well, that was part of the negotiations to get enough votes to carry the bill or whatever, at that time. That's where it's at. It's a maximum \$0.70 against a maximum of 50. This bill brings that up to a maximum of \$1. It does not set it at \$1. So the Public Service Commission still gets to set that rate, deciding on-- based on, just as Commissioner Schramm told you, based on a lot of things they look at, and that's how they set the rate. That was-- yeah, I guess that was the-- really the last point I wanted to make was it's, it's a cap. It's not an amount that it has to go to there. It allows them the flexibility though, to go up to there and maybe get

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increased fundings. Because otherwise, as the one guy just spoke about, from Grand Island area, the Aurora area, many of these things to fund these, it then relies on the local county to do the funding, and most of that all comes from property taxes. So, thank you.

**MOSER:** Senator Storer.

**STORER:** Thank you, Chairman Moser. And thank you, Senator Dorn. I, I think, if I understand it correctly, and this goes back a little bit to the question of Omaha being at a different rate. Those-- the 911 dollars go into a fund and are reallocated for the PSC, I think, based on the number of phone calls received, and so it would be interesting just to look at the total, total numbers versus phone calls and the reallocation of that. But it certainly seems like it makes sense that everybody, at the very least, be at the same rate.

**DORN:** Yes. Well, and you are, you are right. That was part of-- I, I would imagine that was part of the discussion. A lot more phone calls going on right there in that Lincoln, Lincoln, Lincoln itself or even Omaha, and then way out west or whatever. So I imagine that part of the conversation was, well, more of the funding is going to come from here so let's set this at a lower rate, and then-- to make up for the volume instead of so much for the price. Yeah.

**STORER:** But, but the-- if, if there's-- I mean, the number of cell phone usage is generally going to be equated to the number of-- population usually equates to--

**DORN:** Yeah.

**STORER:** --number of calls.

**DORN:** And it-- well, and it-- it's not only with the PSAPs. We, we in Appropriations today had Senator Brandt and Senator Ballard both brought bills for funding for radio systems for emergency squads [INAUDIBLE] and fire departments and stuff. So that's-- we're having that discussion over there. And how, how do they, with the cost of some of these, especially with PSAPs, with all your different radios, and it's not cheap putting those radios in there, and you, you think you never need them. But yet, there are certain times out during the year where you definitely need those. You have to have those. If you're not, you're lost, and then how important of a dollar amount do you put on that?

**MOSER:** OK. Other questions? Seeing none, thank you.



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**DORN:** Thank you.

**MOSER:** Appreciate that. LB576 had 17 proponent, no opponent, and no neutral testimony. OK, that brings us up to LB690. Senator Lonowski.

**LONOWSKI:** Thank you, young man. Good afternoon, Chairman Moser and Transportation Telecommun-- communications Committee. Thank you for this hearing. For the record, my name is Senator Dan Lonowski, Delta-Alpha-November Lima-Oscar-November-Oscar-Whiskey-Sierra-Kilo-India, and I represent the 33rd Legislative District. I am here to introduce LB690, which allows Nebraskans to register all-terrain vehicles and utility-type vehicles for use on county roads and highways. This is similar to Senator Wordekemper's bill that you may have heard already. LB690 allows counties and municipalities to pass an ordinance granting street use of their vehicles in their representative jurisdictions. These vehicles would be prohibited from driving on any Interstate, expressway, freeway, along with highway, designated as prohibited by an ordinance adopted by a county, city, or village. Constituents brought this issue to me, and I know it isn't the first time this committee has heard from Nebraska on this, not only earlier this session, as I mentioned, by Senator Wordekemper, but in prior years as well. And I'm referencing Senator Julie Slama, who introduced similar legislation in 2022 and 2023. The testimony submitted online for my bill, LB690, underscores a desire for many people to see our Legislature address this issue. ATVs and UTVs are very useful for Nebraskans across the state, especially in rural areas. ATVs and UTVs are utilized for work, utility, and recreational purposes. Although we have provisions to allow some of these uses of these vehicles on our streets, our current statutes create a confusing and inconsistent legal patchwork. Where the issue arises is from Nebraskans outside of city limits who desire taking their ATV or UTV into town. While on their route, the ATV or UTV driver may be technically breaking the law unless they fell into the gray area, which allows ATV and UTV use for agricultural purposes. Just by crossing city limits, they would fall into a bubble where, where-- when they are used. If accepted by a municipality, then the ATV and UTV driver would be legal again. LB690 keeps well-intentioned Nebraskans from being labeled as criminals for simple driving their preferred vehicle. LB690 would provide significant economic benefit for our state. Currently, there are Nebraskans who leave our state for off-roading, vacations, or tourism in South Dakota or other surrounding states with looser restrictions on ATVs and UTVs with registration requirements existing in some of these states. ATV and UTV vehicles, our state would garner revenue from ATV and TV vehicles, our state would-- excuse me-- for those

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owners who register their vehicle in Nebraska. The fiscal state-- the fiscal note states, using Department of Motor Vehicle estimates of registrations, that the DMV is projecting a total increase of \$1.2 million in cash for 2025-2026 and \$1.86 million in fiscal year '26-27. The fiscal note does not include the additional economic impact that this may have on our state through tourism, lodging, food, fuel, and other tourist spending that accompanies ATV and UTV use in Nebraska. By opening our roads to ATVs and UTVs, our state can expect an enormous amount of tourism dollars coming from both Nebraskans vacationing in our state, along with others traveling here from other states. I distributed to you some consideration for an amendment, AM442, which strikes the weight limits for ATVs and UTVs. This is offered to coincide with Senator Moser's LA98-- excuse me, LB98, which is on Select File. And I looked at some-- the weights of some electric cars that are being used in Nebraska, and they're 1,000 pounds. My UTV, which I would not register because I only use it for-- in my forest, but my UTV weighs about 1,200 pounds, so it's more than some of the electric vehicles that are on the road. I will gladly work with the committee and any stakeholders on technical changes that need to be made to LB690 to get this bill passed. Thank you, Chairman Moser and members of the committee for your consideration of LB690. I respectfully ask for the committee's support to advance LB690 with the amendment, AM442 in General. I will try to have-- I will try to answer any questions you may have, and I do have a few people following me that are more into the-- some clubs that have UTVs, where they go around the country and ride.

**MOSER:** Senator Fredrickson.

**FREDRICKSON:** You're not playing favorites, I love it. Thank you, Chair Moser.

**MOSER:** I just happened to look this way first.

**FREDRICKSON:** Thank you, Senator Lonowski, for, for being here and for introducing the bill. So you had kind of mentioned this in your opening, of course, and so Senator Wordekemper has a similar bill. We've heard this bill in the committee in the past, with former Senator Slama. I imagine you've probably looked a little bit into some of the concerns that have been brought up from previous hearings around this, primarily as it relates to safety. I'm kind of interested to kind of hear your thoughts on those who might say there might be safety concerns here or--

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**LONOWSKI:** So UTVs are all equipped with seatbelts and that's a requirement. And it's covered. Mine is covered with my vehicle liability insurance. Otherwise, it's, it's on the road just as a motorcycle or a, you know-- my UTV is kind of a clunker. It goes 25 miles an hour, so it's about the same speed as an e-bike.

**FREDRICKSON:** Sure, sure. OK.

**LONOWSKI:** And I don't if that's answering your questions, but.

**FREDRICKSON:** Yeah. No, a little bit. I mean, it's a, a-- from what I, from what I recall from previous years on the bill, one of the-- so the primary opposition has been related to safety conditions and whether or not some of these vehicles are designed and have-- and manufactured to be in the settings that, that are being proposed around that. So that's typically the, the concerns that we get brought up here. So.

**LONOWSKI:** OK. And one thing I'm seeing in some of the communities around me, is there's people driving them all over town but they're not registered. They're not licensed. And, and there's nobody-- I don't, I don't know if they're getting tickets or not. I shouldn't say that part. They might be getting stopped--

**FREDRICKSON:** Sure.

**LONOWSKI:** --or they might not be. So.

**FREDRICKSON:** Thank you.

**MOSER:** Senator DeBoer.

**DeBOER:** Thank you. Thank you for being here and for introducing the bill. Similar to Senator Fredrickson's concerns, my concerns on this bill have always been, and were with Senator Wordekemper, were with Senator Slama, et cetera, the, the safety issues. You know, there's no airbags. There's no walls on these things. We have them at the farm. We drive around. They don't have the hooks for the-- to put your car seats in for the kids.

**LONOWSKI:** Mine does.

**DeBOER:** Well, ours doesn't have the little hooks for--

**LONOWSKI:** OK, OK.

**DeBOER:** --the car seats, so they don't all. So the question would be what do you do about car seats? Because they don't fit well on all of the seats that, you know, they have. Because they are the-- if you have the 2-- we have the sort of first row of seats, second row of seats ones. And then the second row, you know, for the backwards facing car seats, they're not really long enough, you know, the deep enough, the seats. So, you know--

**LONOWSKI:** Yeah.

**DeBOER:** --there's all kinds of questions I have about how do we take care of kids in these things? Because even having them in the belts when there's no wall, there's no door, you know, pretty skinny kids in my family and I worry about them just slipping on out through the--

**LONOWSKI:** Yeah. I guess I would see that part of it as an evolving issue. As I said, mine does. I bought it used so I could put a car seat and take my little grandson, Tucker, around, and he's sitting up pretty snug in there. And, and I'm, and I'm not going to take him down the highway. But I think that would-- you know, I think there's got to be a common sense here for people. If, if a car seat doesn't fit in this, I should not put a child in it. The, the same way with my pickup. My pickup does not have the ability for a car seat in the front, so I don't put a car seat in there, I guess.

**DeBOER:** Yeah. I mean, I just-- I mean, I'm saying the car seat, but I think, you know, we have special rules about, you know, when kids can ride on motorcycles and things like that. I don't know if we have sidecar rules. I don't know if there's such a thing in sidecars-- as sidecars in anything other than the movies. But, you know, there probably are some kind of special rules about who can occupy a sidecar. This is the most I've ever talked about sidecars in my life.

**LONOWSKI:** I've never ridden in one of those, but I'm willing to make any amendments if you want.

**DeBOER:** So I just-- I'm, I'm just very concerned about safety. These vehicles are not designed to be on the highway. That's-- there, there are-- yes. You're right, they're lighter. But maybe there are some lighter vehicles, but those have to go through, you know, crash tests where they look at front and side vehicle impacts, whereas that's just not what's envisioned for these. I bet the manufacturers would tell you, you know-- in fact, they were here in Wordekemper's bill, saying that, that they're not intended for this purpose. I know they go through the small towns or, you know, towns can, can have them.

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Arguably, that would be at lower speeds. I don't know, just thoughts on that.

**LONOWSKI:** I, I guess, I would even-- you know, I would just say that there-- they have to have an ability to cross a highway, just from-- to get from point A to point B, but not necessarily go down highways. Does that make sense?

**DeBOER:** So there are exemptions in our law for agricultural uses for crossing highways. But I would-- I think that counties probably have some sort of rules about roads, but it would not allow you to go on highways. And I, I mean, we hear bills in here about, you know, vulnerable road users who are getting killed on bicycles and things like that going down highways. And this just is another one of those things that makes me concerned that this would be another kind of vulnerable, vulnerable road user that we would want to be watching out for, so that, you know, after I'm gone in 4 or 5 years, we put this bill in place, and the rest of this committee is sitting here hearing about, you know, deaths because of, of this kind of vehicle on the road.

**LONOWSKI:** Yeah, I guess I see it like a-- like an e-bike or like a motorcycle or like something else. There's got to be some parameters, obviously. But I also see a lot of kids crossing highways now who don't have any type of license on them, and I don't even know what their ages are, so at least someone putting a license on it and registering it would be a step in the right direction.

**DeBOER:** It's a difficult question indeed.

**LONOWSKI:** Are there any other questions?

**MOSER:** Any other questions?

**LONOWSKI:** Sorry.

**MOSER:** I'll decide that. Senator Storer.

**STORER:** Thank you, Chairman Moser. And, and maybe some of these have already been addressed. But as I, as I sit here and I think about the safety concerns, hard. Is it, is it any less safe than riding a bicycle down the highway, do you think?

**LONOWSKI:** I would say the only thing that would make it less safe is that you're going up to 35 miles an hour. Some people are on bicycles pretty fast. I don't think it's less safe.

**STORER:** Right.

**LONOWSKI:** You know, I, I would think it's more safe just because you're a little bit bigger target. So it's easier for the other guys to see you.

**STORER:** What about motorcycles? Do you think it's less safe than riding a motorcycle?

**LONOWSKI:** I think it's more safe than riding a motorcycle.

**STORER:** And motorcycles are legal to ride on the highway system, right? In fact, you can ride those down the Interstate. So actually, I've kind of-- I really have been curious why, why we're segmenting ATVs and UTVs when we already acknowledge and allow for things like the motorcycle and bicycles on the highway. The only thing-- the only question I would have is whether or not-- and, and maybe there's some provision in here-- this is a pretty long bill.

**LONOWSKI:** It-- I wrote it all myself.

**STORER:** But to make some-- maybe some provisions for use, you know, whether or not the-- who has the right-of-way. I mean, similar to what we've done for probably bicycles. Because admittedly, you're not going to go, I don't know how fast-- they keep making these more like a small vehicle that--

**LONOWSKI:** I guess the one, the one difference, the one difference here is you don't really have-- like you have a bike lane. Of course, I don't think you're going to see these going down the streets in, in Lincoln unless--

**STORER:** Right.

**LONOWSKI:** --it's parade day or what have you, but these would occupy the entire lane, you know, not a bike lane, but occupy the car lane. And I really, I really see it as a way to kind of rein in the-- what's happening in-- and I don't want to say any little towns, but there's several in my district that I just go there and I see these, you know, UTVs being driven and ATVs, as well. And so, I guess I see it as a way to kind of rein that in. And the, the other thing is these big clubs, groups of people, they'll get together and 15 or 20 people will say, we're going to South Dakota. And South Dakota says, do you need a license? And they get a South Dakota license for \$35 and they use it for 4 days. And then, and then they come home and that South Dakota license really isn't good. Whereas if they have a Nebraska license,

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they have brought that revenue into us, and South Dakota would be appeased by, by, by them being registered.

**STORER:** No. I agree. I-- and I appreciate you bringing the bill, because I, I have heard similar concerns from folks in my area, as well. My-- but my only question would be, you know, the, the-- we might consider is whether or not there should be some specific provisions for how-- who has the right-of-way and-- you're not going to probably be going more than 50 miles an hour in a ATV or UTV on the highway, so not likely that these are going to be traveling at the current speed limit, right? Would be--

**LONOWSKI:** Correct. Correct.

**STORER:** And I don't, I don't know what the answer is to that, but that would be my [INAUDIBLE].

**LONOWSKI:** Correct. And I think somebody behind me can, can answer that. You know, I see it kind of as a, as a win-win, really. We're, we're not going to make, you know, bank on this, but it's better than giving the money away to South Dakota. And then, I just think by registering them, we're actually acknowledging who's legal and not legal. And there's still a stipulation in there, saying that if a farmer is driving from point A to point B just to check his pivots that he can opt out of getting a license. I had 2 farmers tell me why, why do you charge the farmers, too? So, so they're OK to pay the fee, but I just think that would be a, an agricultural right.

**STORER:** Thank you.

**MOSER:** Senator Guereca.

**GUERECA:** Thank you, Chairman. Thank you for being here, Senator Lonowski, for introducing this. Does this touch similar-- the similar pieces of, of, of statute-- sim-- similar section of statute that Senator Wordekemper's bill and Senator Moser's bill does?

**LONOWSKI:** It-- it's, it's quite similar. Yeah.

**GUERECA:** OK. All right. Thank you.

**MOSER:** Senator Brandt.

**BRANDT:** Well, thank you, Chairman Moser. I apologize. We had a joint hearing in-- at Appropriations and now we're back. And that was one of my questions. What's the difference between this bill and Senator

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Wordekemper's? What are you trying to-- are you trying to license the drivers or the vehicles?

**LONOWSKI:** The vehicles. Your, your driver's license would suffice for this. It's a 4-wheeled vehicle. There's not a lot of difference. So what we're really trying to do is get the vehicles registered.

**BRANDT:** Why? Why?

**LONOWSKI:** Well, because there's a lot of people driving around in Plymouth, Nebraska on these things, and they're not licensed. I don't know about Plymouth, but there's some small towns--

**BRANDT:** No, you're right.

**LONOWSKI:** There's small towns where, other than agricultural, people are using them as recreational vehicles, and I just think it helps control the who-- who's driving what. And, and one other thing we talked about is there's a lot of people that go out of the state for tourism. And a couple of states charge us-- they have to register the vehicle and get a license and pay \$35 or \$50 in that state, rather than do it here.

**BRANDT:** And ag would be exempt like they are now. There would be no new rules on agriculture. Correct?

**LONOWSKI:** Correct.

**BRANDT:** OK. Thank you.

**MOSER:** Other questions? So what's the purpose of your bill when cities and counties can already allow UTVs and ATVs to operate in their cities, right?

**LONOWSKI:** Well, they can.

**MOSER:** I mean, in Columbus you can drive your UTV all over. Well, you can't drive it down a divided highway, but anywhere else. You know, you have to have a seatbelts, you have to have a flag, and you have-- buy a registration placard or some kind of plate or something to put on there.

**LONOWSKI:** I think this--

**MOSER:** You're just forcing every county to allow it?



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**LONOWSKI:** I, I think this offers you some flexibility on you got a licensed vehicle now and you-- it's a, it's a kind of a way to make sure you know that they're not stolen or they're, or they're not going other places. But the other thing is when people go out of state with them, if they license them, they've got that part of it done. And I-- I've just had a group of people come to me and say, we, we need to do this. And so, I guess--

**MOSER:** Are you going to allow--

**LONOWSKI:** I would--

**MOSER:** Are you going to allow counties or cities to opt out and not allow UTVs in their town?

**LONOWSKI:** No. I just think if we have an agricultural allowance, that would be good.

**MOSER:** So the rules for driving a UTV in Columbus would be overridden by your bill?

**LONOWSKI:** I reckon. Yeah.

**MOSER:** All right.

**LONOWSKI:** One thing on that. You know, if, if there's a municipality that's saying you can drive anything anywhere and I think the rules have changed now that UTVs are up to 1,500 pounds and-- or, or larger, and it's almost like having a car where-- and you're not required to license it.

**MOSER:** Yes. OK. Other questions? All right. Seeing none, thank you.

**LONOWSKI:** Thank you.

**MOSER:** Are there supporters? No. You can go ahead and take your chair.

**LONOWSKI:** OK.

**MOSER:** We know you're for it. Other supporters for LB690.

**KEN LONOWSKI:** Good afternoon, Senator Moser, Transportation Committee. I am Ken Lonowski, K-e-n L-o-n-o-w-s-k-i. As a owner-operator, I want to cover a few areas here in the state of Nebraska that other-owner operators also have concerns with. Starting with my family vacation, twice a year, I go to Wyoming, Colorado, or South Dakota and I go to UTV riding, riding the byways, roadways of them states. While I'm on

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vacation, I have to buy permits, make sure that I have insurance for my UTV. We also spend money on food, fuel, camping sites, all that sort of stuff. So between its 3 1/2 weeks I take on vacation for UTVs, my family spends about \$4,000 in different states. I think that's revenue that could stay within Nebraska if we provide the bills to-- the bill to do this. And some other areas I'd like to cover is some of the safety features. The majorities-- majority of the UTVs and ATVs come a lot-- with a lot of safety features, just like your cars and pickups do. They come with daylight running lights, they come with low beam, high beam lights, tail lights, brake lights, 3-point retractable seatbelts, disc brakes, adjustable steering wheel, adjustable driver's seat, windshields, horns, turning sig-- turn signals. As you can see, you also can put a baby seat in the backseat of a 4-seater. On, on, on the 4-seaters, you can put a baby seat there, just so I can haul the grandkids around. I do know there was a question about putting them in there. Even like some of the cars today, not all of them have the latches where you put the hooks. You have to do it the old-fashioned way, by crossing the seat belt in behind the seat to put it in there. So that's-- shouldn't be a real big issue. That's just a safety feature newer cars have. A few other safety features UTVs have that cars do not is they come with a roll cage. And that roll cage has the same material that is made with stock cars and racing cars that they race out on the Indianap-- Indianapolis 500. Also, the 3-point retractable seatbelt comes with a, a very special feature that I wish my teenage kids had, which is if it's not latched, the UTV will only go 15 miles an hour, and that'd be cool to have in a lot of cars. Just some other concerns I have is the, the size of the vehicle. My UTV is a Honda. It is bigger than a smart car. It's about the same size as the Cooper. It is a 2-seater. Hondas are not the biggest models out there. If you had a 4-seater, it would be bigger than the actual smart cars, the mini cars, the Coopers that are out there. I do have measurements if you want them. I know there was some questions asked that I may have answers for up till then. So, that's all I have.

**MOSER:** All right. Questions from the committee? Seeing none, thank you very much.

**KEN LONOWSKI:** Thank you.

**MOSER:** Anybody else to testify in support of LB690? Welcome.

**KAYLA WALFORD:** My name is Kayla Walford, W-a-l-f-o-r-d. I spoke in front of you guys for the LB337 bill, as well. I am with a dealership out of Omaha, Nebraska. So I am a for it, just because we're really rural out there. And all of the farmers come to us, saying they can

drive their machines in the rural area for farm, farm exempt, but they cannot drive it to town, so they're having issues with that. And this bill would help put everyone where they can drive to town or town to town. I know you mentioned earlier, like Columbus, you can drive it in town. That is correct. But how the law states right now is when you're driving in your Kayo on your farm, you'd have to trailer it and take it to town. And you could drive it around the town with the flag and the sign and all that, but then you'd have to dri-- trailer it back, where this bill would help you just drive your machine into town, do the stuff you need to do in town, then drive back home, or drive from like, Columbus to North Bend, or something. You know, rural county areas, just driving from town to town instead of having to trailer it from place to place, or just in Washington County alone-- because that's where we are from is Washington County-- I know a lot of our sheriffs are having issues knowing the laws between municipalities. Because how it states right now, is like Arlington is ride-on machines, so it has to straddle like a motorcycle, and those ones are legal in town. But Kennard, which is only 10 miles away, is riding like a golf cart-type, so it has to be a side-by-side, and they have trouble knowing which town has which rules. So if we have a set of rules across the state that are all the same, it'd be easier for our sheriffs to know what is right and what's wrong. Another thing that was brought up was the chil-- children in it. And I completely understand the safety features. I know our machine is a 4-seat razor. It does fit the child seats. But I know when we talked at LB337 about helmets, and I feel like if they were like 16 years or younger, having helmet clause in there I think would be helpful, too. That way, you know the younger generation is safer in them. Then I know we talked about helmets like motorcycles. You have to take the class until you're 21, 21 and older, you don't have to wear the helmet, that kind of thing. I think that would be a good idea to implement into this bill. That's not. So, that's what I have.

**MOSER:** OK. Questions from committee members? Seeing none, thank you for your testimony.

**KAYLA WALFORD:** Thank you.

**MOSER:** Are there more supporters for LB690? Seeing none, how about opposition to LB690? Is there any opposition? Seeing none, how about neutral testimony? Welcome.

**JOSH EICKMEIER:** Thank you. Good afternoon, Chairman and committee members. My name is Josh Eickmeier, J-o-s-h E-i-c-k-m-e-i-e-r. I was here testifying in the same neutral capacity for LB337 by Senator

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Wordekemper. I just wanted to reiterate our board's position, wanting to make it clear that when you start defining ATVs and UTVs as motor vehicles, they can slip into our Motor Vehicle Industry Regulation Act, which is what we have jurisdiction over, where we license the dealerships and manufacturers, mostly of, of cars, trucks, motorcycles, and large trailers. If that's not the intent of the, of the bill, then I would suggest an amendment that I believe was discussed with the previous bill, with LB337, potentially that would make it clear that these ATVs, ATVs and UTVs would not be considered motor vehicles for the purposes of our Motor Vehicle Industry Regulation Act. If the intent is to have them regulated, know that our agency and our board, we would then license all of the dealerships and manufacturers that would fall into that category. So if that is the intent, then do nothing except for, of course, advance this and pass it. But if, if you do not want it to be included, then I would recommend that small amendment. And I'd be happy to work with legal counsel or anyone else to that end.

**MOSER:** OK. Questions for the testifier? Senator Brandt.

**BRANDT:** Thank you, Chairman Moser. What, what organization do you represent?

**JOSH EICKMEIER:** The Motor Vehicle Industry Licensing Board.

**BRANDT:** And that's a state board?

**JOSH EICKMEIER:** Yes.

**BRANDT:** OK.

**JOSH EICKMEIER:** We often get confused with the DMV because we are located right next to them in the state office building. And every once in a while, I'll get a phone call asking how to take the interlock off of their vehicle, to which I cannot help. But we do-- we license all the, the dealerships. You-- yeah, you can get a combination license, which would be cars, trucks, motorcycles, trailers. Oh, and by trailer, I'm specifically talking over 9,000 GBW. Then we would also-- we also license the manufacturers. So we not only would, for example, Ford, the motor company, would have a license with us as a manufacturer, but also all the Ford dealerships would also have licenses, as dealers, with us.

**BRANDT:** All right. Thank you.

**MOSER:** Senator Storer.

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**STORER:** Thank you, Chairman Moser. And thank you. I-- just curious if you had-- if you've reached out to Senator Lonowski's office yet to discuss the-- a possible amendment.

**JOSH EICKMEIER:** I'm not on, on this particular bill. I was contacted by Senator Wordekemper's office. And I go back to when Senator Slama originally had this bill. I know I worked with legal counsel at that time, regarding an amendment that would-- her intention, I think, was not to be included within our act. And so there was an amendment that would make it clear that they were not to be included. But as a policy decision, we don't have a position on that. It's just wanting to make sure that there aren't any unintended consequences.

**STORER:** And I presume you're happy to, happy to do that, though.

**JOSH EICKMEIER:** Yes. And I pro-- I, I know I provided language that time. I know there's always turnover and people move around and senators are term-limited. And so I, I do believe there was a draft somewhere floating around, as well. But that's-- it's not a hard amendment. Of course, I used to work here and I have to be careful saying that, but it would literally be one sentence, potentially.

**MOSER:** You say trailers over 9,000 gross?

**JOSH EICKMEIER:** Yes.

**MOSER:** That's vehicle and the trailer or just the trailer?

**JOSH EICKMEIER:** The trailer as it's loaded. So typically, you're talking like a--

**MOSER:** It would be a double axle or more?

**JOSH EICKMEIER:** Yeah. A, a lot of them are goosenecks, typically. Not the ones that you're transporting your ATVs and UTVs on typically. Not a-- not one-- like the long ones.

**MOSER:** But you do need a license for them, right?

**JOSH EICKMEIER:** Well, we don't license.

**MOSER:** The dealers.

**JOSH EICKMEIER:** We don't license the dealers or the manufacturers if they're under the 9,000 GBW.

**MOSER:** Oh, OK. All right.

**JOSH EICKMEIER:** Yeah, so I--

**MOSER:** You still have to have a plate.

**JOSH EICKMEIER:** And that's betw-- that's the DMV.

**MOSER:** My plates do. I thought I could maybe duck that.

**JOSH EICKMEIER:** I could put in a good word for you.

**MOSER:** Maybe I could put some sandbags on it and get it up to 9,000 pounds.

**JOSH EICKMEIER:** That's a lot of sand.

**MOSER:** Other questions? Thank you.

**JOSH EICKMEIER:** Thank you so much.

**MOSER:** Sure. Is there-- are there more testifiers in the neutral?

**CANDACE MEREDITH:** Good afternoon.

**MOSER:** Welcome.

**CANDACE MEREDITH:** Candace Meredith, C-a-n-d-a-c-e M-e-r-e-d-i-t-h, and I'm with the Nebraska Association of County Officials, known as NACO. We're just here in the neutral position, again, just as-- just to say that as far as their registrations are concerned, we would work with the Department of Motor Vehicles to help implement whatever is necessary to make that happen. Again, that consistency thing is somewhat important if that's going to be a statewide-- trying to go through. A lot of folks live on county lines, and so just making sure that we're doing it statewide, if that's the direction that the legislator-- legislation wanted to go, so I'd be happy to answer any questions.

**MOSER:** Questions from committee members? Seeing none, thank you. Are there other neutral testifiers? Anybody else in the neutral? Senator, come on back up. So we received 26 proponent testimonies, 1 opponent, and 1 neutral online. Thank you.

**LONOWSKI:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, committee members. This bill helps Columbus. That ratio of proponents to opponent testifiers you just stated is something I welcome for all my bills. Thanks to all those who testified for their time today. I did have another man coming from the west, but I read my text. He's not coming

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due to the weather. I would ask that the committee support LB690 with its amendment that limit-- that talks about weight, AM442. I will work with Josh Eickmeier and I'll speak with, with Candace Meredith. I did not realize there was a Motor Vehicle Industry Licensing Board. So I did-- we did talk to Motor Vehicle-- Department of Motor Vehicles on the other part. So I respectfully ask for this committee's consideration for advancing LB690 to General File. Are there any questions?

**MOSER:** OK. Any further questions from committee members? Seeing none, thank you for your testimony. I will end the--

**LONOWSKI:** Thank you for your time.

**MOSER:** --hearing for today for Transportation and Telecommunications. Thank you.