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Transportation and Telecommunications Committee January 20, 2026
Rough Draft

MOSER: The hearing for the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee will now come to order. I'm chairman of the Committee, Mike Moser. I represent District 22, which is Platte County and most of Stanton County. And we'll begin our senator introductions with Senator Guereca.

GUERECA: How's it going everyone? I'm Dunixi Guereca, represent downtown and south Omaha, LD 7.

STORER: Good afternoon. Senator Tanya Storer, I represent District 43: Dawes, Sheridan, Cherry, Keya Paha, Boyd, Brown, Rock, Blaine, Loup, Garfield, and Custer.

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

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

BALLARD: Beau Ballard, District 21 in northwest Lincoln, northern Lancaster County.

BOSN: Carolyn Bosn, I represent District 25, which is southeast Lincoln, Lancaster County, including Bennett.

MOSER: Thank you, Senators. Our committee clerk is Katy Coquat, and our legal counsel is Gus Shoemaker. There are green testifier sheets on a table by the entrance of the room. Please complete one and hand it to the page if you want to come up and testify. For those not testifying, please sign the yellow sheet in the book on the table near the entrance. Legislative policy is that letters for the record must be received by the committee by 8 a.m. the day of the hearing. Handouts submitted by testifiers will be included as part of the record as exhibits. Please provide 10 copies of any handout and give them to the page. Additional copies will be made by the page if necessary. Senators may come and go during our hearing. This is common and may be required, as they might be presenting bills in other committees during this same time. Testimony will begin with the introducer's opening statement, then we will hear from any supporters, then those in opposition, and then those speaking in neutral. The introducer of the bill will then be given the opportunity to make closing statements if they wish to do so. Begin your testimony by giving us your first and last name and please also spell them for the record. Today, we'll be using a 3-minute timer system. Be sure to turn

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off your phones or put them on vibrate. Yeah, mine's on silent. All right. We're going to be, be, beginning with the gubernatorial appointments. So that brings our first testifier today is Matthew O'Daniel. Welcome to the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee.

MATTHEW O'DANIEL: Thank you.

MOSER: If you-- tell us about yourselves a little bit, and--

MATTHEW O'DANIEL: Sure. My name is Matthew O'Daniel, M-a-t-t-h-e-w O-'-D-a-n-i-e-l. I am a Honda dealer in Omaha, Nebraska. Our store is O'Daniel Honda. Been involved in the car business my whole life really, as I'm a third-generation car dealer. Full-time active since 1997. I was a salesperson for several years, sales manager, new car sales manager, used car sales manager, business manager, general manager, and now dealer. I'm a 1997 graduate of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and I'm proud to have our-- both of our children are students down here. I have a senior and a freshman right now.

MOSER: Great. Questions for our nominee? Senator Brandt.

BRANDT: Thank you, Chairman Moser. Thank you for coming in today. Are you a reappointment or are you a new appointment to this board?

MATTHEW O'DANIEL: I'm a reappointment. Yes, sir.

BRANDT: So tell me a little bit about what this board does and how important it is to the people of the state of Nebraska.

MATTHEW O'DANIEL: Sure. So the Motor Vehicle Licensing Board, you know, one of the things we do is regulate and, I believe, set policy for the car dealers, essentially how we can renew our dealership licenses with the state association. We work with the New Car Dealers Association as well, and the Department of Motor Vehicles as well, and essentially set policy for the dealers through the-- franchise dealers through the state.

BRANDT: What about used car dealers?

MATTHEW O'DANIEL: Yes. We're represented with used car dealers, as well.

BRANDT: OK.

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Rough Draft

MATTHEW O'DANIEL: On our board.

BRANDT: Thank you.

MATTHEW O'DANIEL: You're welcome.

MOSER: Senator Guereca.

GUERECA: Yes, sir. Thank you for coming in and for serving on the Motor Vehicle Licensing Board. My second session, so I don't know much about it. Really quickly, what's the process? Is there a set number of car dealers in the state, or let's say I want to get a license. What's that process look like?

MATTHEW O'DANIEL: Sure. So on the board, I believe there's 10 members. We actually have a meeting this Thursday morning in the Capitol offices. To become a dealer in the state of Nebraska, there's a licensing process, absolutely. To become dealers, we obviously have to have a location. We have to be bonded. We have to be able to complete sales and service for our customers. And then, of course, as a new car dealer, we have to have a franchise agreement with the manufacturer.

GUERECA: Thank you, sir.

MATTHEW O'DANIEL: You're welcome.

MOSER: OK. Any other questions? OK. Thank you very much. Appreciate your coming in to answer our questions today. You can go ahead and have a seat.

MATTHEW O'DANIEL: Thank you.

MOSER: OK. There are, there are people here who speak in support of this appointment? Is there anyone here to speak in opposition to this appointment? Anybody to speak in the neutral on this appointment? OK. That'll conclude our hearing on Matthew O'Daniel. Now, we'll hear from Chad Tessman. Mr. Tessman, come on up. Welcome.

CHAD TESSMAN: Thank you. My name is Chad Tessman. It's C-h-a-d T-e-e-s-s-m-a-n. I'm the owner of Velocity Auto Sales in York, Nebraska. I have been in business there since 2011. I formerly worked at a new car dealer here in Lincoln, Russwood Chrysler, for quite a few years before that. I am seeking a-- I'm getting a-- reappointed to the Licensing Board. I'm also the president of the Independent Auto Dealers Association for the state, so. We have-- my wife, Jessica's

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Rough Draft

here. We have 2 children, a sophomore at Henderson High School and a junior at Concordia College.

MOSER: All right. Questions from the committee? Senator Bosn.

BOSN: Thank you. I just have a question. So this says you were appointed in 2024 and your current appointment lasts until 2027. So is this an appointment to go then, the 4 years beyond that?

CHAD TESSMAN: So we-- there was a point where I believe that-- so I was appointed to a term before the 2024. That was a--

BOSN: OK.

CHAD TESSMAN: --a reappointment. There was a kind of a timeline where appointments weren't happening, I think. I'm not sure exactly what was going on, but there was a delay in appointments-- for re-appointments and for new, new appointments.

BOSN: OK. So is this for your-- is what you're seeking a place for right now for the--

CHAD TESSMAN: I think it's the 2024.

BOSN: OK.

CHAD TESSMAN: Yeah.

BOSN: Oh, interesting. OK.

MOSER: OK. Any other questions?

CHAD TESSMAN: I did-- I guess-- sorry.

MOSER: Go ahead.

CHAD TESSMAN: I, I wasn't thinking a-- did want to also go off of-- from what Matt said. Our association deal-- or the-- our board does deal a lot with infractions with the dealers that are having infractions in the state, whether it would be advertising infractions, title infractions, paperwork infractions. It's super helpful to have knowledgeable dealers on that board because we see the side of the, the industry where those infractions may come from. We see why dealers may have made those infractions and how to help correct that. We also, on-- myself, as part of the Independent Auto Dealers Association, we did get legislation passed for continuing education for independent

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Transportation and Telecommunications Committee January 20, 2026
Rough Draft

dealers only. Franchises get a lot of education, but the education is going to be a lot on some of these infractions that we're dealing with, with the board, to try to alleviate that for-- mostly, it is going to help the consumers, so.

MOSER: Senator Brandt.

BRANDT: Thank you, Chairman Moser. So do you guys level fines on these infractions or, or?

CHAD TESSMAN: Yes. So our, our board does. The-- I don't know if you'd call it a fine. It's a waiver, I believe is what we call it. And so, somebody would pay a waiver or they would come up in front of the board if they don't believe that their infraction was something that was-- you know, if they want to dispute the infraction, then they can come in front of the board and, and state their case. But most typically, we're level-- leveling a, a waiver of that, which is-- depends on, you know, the severity and, and how many times they've had a infraction.

BRANDT: So do you see a lot of what I call title washing in the state of Nebraska? Would that be your board that would deal with this piece of that?

CHAD TESSMAN: We don't see that as much. What you're referring to as title washing would be like a-- are you speaking to like a salvage title changed into a good title? We will see that and we will deal with dealers that are doing that and we would have some penalties for dealers that are doing that as the lic-- licensing board, because that would be an infraction. Most of our infractions would be advertising-type stuff, where, say, a dealer is saying-- not, not, not specifying that they're a dealer. They're advertising as maybe a private individual but they are a dealer, or something with a title. They're not turning over the title soon enough, or they're possibly just not advertising that it's salvage of title car or that there's a problem with the car that that has to be--

BRANDT: So when the public--

CHAD TESSMAN: --satisfied.

BRANDT: Let's say I have a constituent that has an issue. Should they contact your board to address that issue?

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Transportation and Telecommunications Committee January 20, 2026
Rough Draft

CHAD TESSMAN: Oh, definitely. If it's a dealer with a-- if it's an issue with a dealer. So for example, if they're not getting their title, the Dealer Board would be the place. And we have investigators that would go out and talk to that dealer. Even if it's something that's really not the dealer's fault, it's helpful. Because they will mitigate and be the in-between, and say, you know, hey, what's going on with this situation? I've had to call myself on the board. Hey, what's going on with this situation? This is my side, this is their side, and then they'll determine if, if there's something they need to proceed with, with the dealer, or if there's something that, you know, it's-- everything was followed. The people are just unhappy or something. So.

BRANDT: All right. Thank you.

CHAD TESSMAN: Yeah.

MOSER: So if people don't think they're getting the gas mileage that they claimed, can they complain to you?

CHAD TESSMAN: They can complain. But it'll probably get-- it'll probably be settled as no cause or no, no solution.

MOSER: Yeah. That was in jest, of course.

CHAD TESSMAN: Right.

MOSER: So sometimes what we say is people actually listen. Sometimes, it's just as well if you don't listen to whatever we're talking about.

CHAD TESSMAN: And it's definitely good to have a place to go, because I think there's a lot of consumers that don't know what to do in this state. So they maybe do have an issue, and they don't know that there's a board that, that can help solve their issue.

MOSER: So if a person had enough complaints to the board, could their license be suspended or pulled?

CHAD TESSMAN: Oh, certainly.

MOSER: And do you--

CHAD TESSMAN: If they're val--

MOSER: --your board--

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Rough Draft

CHAD TESSMAN: If they're valid, you know, issues, we've-- there, there could be someone that, you know, if you continually are, are breaking the rules, the laws, your-- you could have your license revoked or suspended.

MOSER: That would-- it would take a series of transgressions of a certain level to, to come to that point?

CHAD TESSMAN: I would, I would say. Yeah.

MOSER: Have you ever had to suspend somebody?

CHAD TESSMAN: Not since I've been on the--

MOSER: Yeah.

CHAD TESSMAN: No.

MOSER: OK. Any other questions? All right. Thank you.

CHAD TESSMAN: All right. Thank you.

MOSER: Appreciate, appreciate you being here. And also, I appreciate Mr. O'Daniel coming in to talk to us a little bit about their appointments.

CHAD TESSMAN: All right. Thank you.

MOSER: All right. Thank you. OK. At this point, we've got a bill to consider from Senator-- oh, I'm sorry. I got ahead of myself. Are there any other people here to speak in support of this nomination? Is there any opposition to this nomination? Anybody to speak in the neutral? OK. Thank you. All right. That will close the hearing on Chad Tessman. Now, we'll have LB738. Is that the order we've got them in, Katy?

BRANDT: LB771. That's what it says on here, Mike?

MOSER: Well, I've got that one last here, but what's, what's the official? All right. We're going to do it in the official order. I apologize, Senator. Please take a seat.

BOSN: Keeping him on his toes.

BALLARD: Yeah, you are.

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Transportation and Telecommunications Committee January 20, 2026
Rough Draft

STORER: Wanted to see him pace back and forth.

MOSER: Welcome to the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee.

BALLARD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon, Chairman Moser and members of the Transportation Committee. My name is Beau Ballard. For the record, that is B-e-a-u B-a-l-l-a-r-d, and I represent District 21 in northwest Lincoln, northern Lancaster County. LB771 streamlines the process introduced in LB629 that was passed in 2015. Currently, when a state of emergency is declared by the Governor, there is an immediate, a com-- complete ban on dynamic pricing across the entire state. This requires that the Governor take extra steps after the state of emergency declare-- declaration, so to state that ban doesn't apply to all counties or all areas, just certain areas in the state. This bill would allow the Governor to declare if a ban applies when the announcement of the state of emergency or a limited ban in a certain area, allowing the Governor to immediately state whether or not the application even applies and if so, if it applies to a certain area, would streamline the whole process. It would allow the rideshare drivers who do not live in an impacted area to be able to respond to market conditions instead of having their earnings limited. Rideshare drivers range from people driving as a full-time job to those driving as a second income and tho-- some that just enjoy driving and meeting people. They should not have their earnings or ability impacted by events that happened on the other side of the state. The Governor still has the flexibility to make these findings after the declaration of emergency. However, the bill gives him the authority to include the declarations in the original state of emergency proclamation. I would be happy to answer any questions, but we do have NEMA director to testify behind me. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MOSER: Senator Fredrickson.

FREDRICKSON: Thank you, Chair Moser. Thank you, Senator Ballard, for bringing this bill.

MOSER: We-- did we announce-- you were here. OK. Sorry. Was making sure you introduced yourself.

FREDRICKSON: Oh, yes. I did. Yes.

MOSER: OK. Go ahead.

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Transportation and Telecommunications Committee January 20, 2026
Rough Draft

FREDRICKSON: OK. Thank you, Chair Moser. Thank you, Senator Ballard, for being here. So I just want to make sure I, I understand this fully. So essentially, this is like surge pricing for Uber--

BALLARD: Correct. Correct.

FREDRICKSON: --or Lyft or something like that. OK. Got it.

BALLARD: Correct.

FREDRICKSON: So the current statute says that if the Governor declares a state of emergency, surge pricing is prohibited statewide.

BALLARD: Correct.

FREDRICKSON: Correct? OK. So in this case, the Governor would be able to say, let's say a state of emergency is in Scotts Bluff, right? So state of emergency, Scotts Bluff, no surge pricing there, but in Omaha, surge pricing--

BALLARD: Surge price [INAUDIBLE].

FREDRICKSON: --can still occur.

BALLARD: Yep.

FREDRICKSON: OK. Other question for you. What happens if this were to pass, if the Governor does not specify an area? Would the state of emergency apply to the entire state automatically, or would this require the Governor to say, for example-- in order for surge pricing not to be available. Like, does, does he have to name-- or he or she have to name a specific area, or?

BALLARD: You-- it's my understanding, usually in a declaration of emergency, it says counties-- Scotts Bluff, Box Butte. But then currently, under current statute, that would include dynamic pricing would be prohibited across the state. So this would just be dynamic pricing is prohibited in those specific counties.

FREDRICKSON: So it's the, the specific named counties [INAUDIBLE].

BALLARD: Correct.

FREDRICKSON: OK. Thank you.

BALLARD: That is my understanding. Yes.

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Transportation and Telecommunications Committee January 20, 2026
Rough Draft

MOSER: Senator Guereca.

GUERECA: Thank you, Chairman. Thank you, Senator, for bringing this. So if, if this were to pass, would the Governor have to say state of, state of emergency, and in these counties, no surge pricing, or is it automatically--

BALLARD: That is not-- I have to confirm, but that is not my understand-- it would be-- that would be included.

GUERECA: Gotcha.

BALLARD: It wouldn't have to be specifically named.

GUERECA: OK.

MOSER: Senator Storer.

STORER: Thank you, Chairman Moser. Just to further clarify that, because I'm reading it and rereading it. So this-- and that makes total sense from the concept that the ban should not be statewide, you know, given one declaration, maybe, in one county--

BALLARD: Correct.

STORER: --which is how it currently works.

BALLARD: Correct.

STORER: But if I'm understanding it correct, the Governor would have to-- it would automatically-- the dynamic pricing would automatically be permitted under an emergency declaration of any kind, unless the Governor expressly prohibits it. Is that right?

BALLARD: My understanding, yes.

STORER: OK. Thank you.

MOSER: Other questions? So I guess the purpose for the bill originally was to keep people from being gouged in case of an emergency.

BALLARD: Correct.

MOSER: And you would allow certain areas to operate in normal conditions if they're not part of the emergency area.

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Transportation and Telecommunications Committee January 20, 2026
Rough Draft

BALLARD: That is the goal.

MOSER: Stirring up a bee's nest here, or is this--

BALLARD: I think everyone's on board, so I, I hope everyone-- I have not heard differently. But I think everyone's on board.

MOSER: All right. Well, thank you very much. Appreciate your testimony. Is there anybody else here to speak in support of LB771? Welcome.

ERVIN PORTIS: Good after-- afternoon, Chairman Moser, members of the committee. I am Ervin, E-r-v-i-n, Portis, P-o-r-t-i-s. I'm the assistant director of the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency, and I'm here before you today in support of LB771, just so your questions got it right. To start, just so we're all on the same page, let me define dynamic pricing, which, which I believe you did. It's when a network transportation company, such as Uber or Lyft, changes the pricing for rides to reflect a temporary increase in demand. Now dream a little bit here with me. Think in March, when Nebraska basketball is playing in the men's-- playing in the Final Four, and CHI and PBA are packed full, and there's a demand on Uber and Lyft. That's kind of a nice scenario, isn't it? But under the current law, probably prohibited. So let's, let's fix that. Dynamic pricing is handled differently under 75-327, in the event that a state of emergency is declared by the Governor. Currently, all dynamic pricing is prohibited for the duration of the state of the emergency. Unfortunately, due to the nature of emergencies-- and I'll get into that in a minute-- this blanket prohibition failed to consider the realities of a state of emergency, so LB771 addresses those oversights. A state of an emergency declared by the Governor is generally for a specific, limited geographic area of the state delineated in the proclamation. I gave you a copy of a proclamation we articulated. I believe it was, well, last year, August of last year. Current law does not make the same distinction. Any state of emergency would prohibit, prohibit dynamic pricing statewide. A small, limited emergency in Scotts Bluff County, such as a wildfire, would trigger a statewide ban, which would prohibit dynamic pricing in Omaha. You can understand how this would be detrimental to drivers during large events, such as the College World Series or Berkshire Hathaway or other events. The statute does not also consider that the state of emergency does not close until all the bills are paid. And sometimes, that's multiple years. Most times, that's multiple years. So the state of Nebraska is still paying out-- for example, FEMA funds for projects from the 2019 floods, probably

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Transportation and Telecommunications Committee January 20, 2026
Rough Draft

with another 3-4 years before we're going to be done with that disaster. The state's share of those projects are paid from the Governor's Emergency Fund, which requires an open emergency proclamation to disperse funds related to the emergency. The reality is there's 2 phases to any emergency. First is the response, which is generally days to several weeks, maybe a bit longer. Then comes the bills, and it takes time to pay them. So essentially, there are multiple open proclamations. I think we have, right now, 12 open federal disaster declarations and a handful of nonfederal but state disaster declarations. That makes, in, in essence, makes the prohibition on dynamic pricing permanent due to those overlapping prohibitions. That's what we're trying to eliminate. So by changing the method of triggering the prohibition on dynamic pricing to the Governor's discretion, it gives the Governor the ability to evaluate each situation and make a case-by-case determination on whether it's necessary to prohibit, prohibit dynamic pricing. If so, the Governor can tailor each order to fit the event. Thank you, Chairman Moser, members of the committee, for your time. I'm prepared to answer any questions you might have.

MOSER: Senator Fredrickson.

FREDRICKSON: Thank you, Chair Moser. Thank you for being here and for providing your, your testimony. So I, I just want to make sure I'm understanding. I mean, I, I, I, I, I, I agree with the general premise here. I think it's, it's-- it makes a lot of sense to me. But as I'm reading the legislation itself, I guess-- can you help me understand-- so it-- I'm writing this as a-- the Governor would have to specific-- so it doesn't automatically ban surge pricing in the specified areas unless the Governor makes an additional specific outlawing of that.

ERVIN PORTIS: Unless specifically prohibited by the Governor in the emergency proclamation or by an executive order.

FREDRICKSON: Right. So my question is, why not almost keep the, the statute the way it is, but have it be limited to the areas of the order where the Governor could opt out? My-- and my thinking of that, just to kind of put a finer point on that is, I mean, in a state of emergency, there's 300,000 billion things to think about, and you know, is a dynamic pricing going to be at the top of the list for the Governor to additionally put that in there, is my question.

ERVIN PORTIS: The question is whether or not it belongs in th, in the proclamation in the first place. Is it consistent with the Nebraska

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Transportation and Telecommunications Committee January 20, 2026
Rough Draft

Emergency Management Act? And I think that's a valid question. So the best way to do this so that we don't have this permanent state of emergency affecting dynamic pricing, we can address it specifically.

FREDRICKSON: Right. So in other words, why not specif-- like, it sounds like you have to do the additional state of saying the, the statute that we passed previously is actually in effect, versus it just automatically being in effect for the area that's affected.

ERVIN PORTIS: I think that's a correct interpretation.

FREDRICKSON: OK. OK.

MOSER: Senator Guereca.

GUERECA: Thank you for being here, Mr. Portis. So we have-- you said 12 open emergency proclamations?

ERVIN PORTIS: We have 12 open federal disa-- federal disaster declarations, so 12 open proclamations and a handful of other state-declared proclamations related to wildfires and other events.

GUERECA: Sure. But there isn't a state-wide ban currently on dynamic pricing. So does that mean in every single one of those 12, the Governor included the line, this proclamation of a state of emergency does not trigger--

ERVIN PORTIS: No, we didn't start putting that language in until about a year ago.

GUERECA: So then why isn't there a permanent ban right now?

ERVIN PORTIS: One can make the argument there is.

GUERECA: Well, there isn't, because if, if I get in late from flying into Omaha, the price does go up. So dynamic pricing is currently in effect in Nebraska.

ERVIN PORTIS: I'm not sure I understand your question. With, with a state of emergency, dynamic pricing is the ability to surge or increase fares relevant to demand--

GUERECA: Correct.

ERVIN PORTIS: --is, is prohibited--

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Transportation and Telecommunications Committee January 20, 2026
Rough Draft

GUERECA: Correct.

ERVIN PORTIS: --under an emergency.

GUERECA: That, that-- that's right. But what I'm saying is if there's 12 open proclamations, shouldn't there currently be a ban on dynamic pricing in Nebraska?

ERVIN PORTIS: Yes.

GUERECA: Then why is dynamic pricing occurring in the state of Nebraska?

MOSER: You haven't brought it up yet.

ERVIN PORTIS: I'm not sure I have the answer to that question.

GUERECA: OK. All right. Thank you, sir.

MOSER: Other questions? Seeing none, thank you for your testimony. Anybody else to speak in support of LB771? Greetings.

KRISTEN HASSEBROOK: Greetings.

MOSER: Welcome.

KRISTEN HASSEBROOK: Thank you. Good afternoon, Chairman Moser, members of the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee. My name is Kristen Hassebrook, K-r-i-s-t-e-n H-a-s-s-e-b-r-o-o-k, and I'm here today as a registered lobbyist and testifying in support of LB771 on behalf of Uber Technologies. Uber has been connecting riders and drivers in Nebraska since 2015. Every week, thousands of people in Nebraska use the Uber app to earn income on their own schedule. Tens of-- and tens of thousands of Nebraskans rely on Uber to get to doctor's appointments, visit their loved ones, or just get home safely. LB771 addresses a refinement in legislation that passed back in 2015. Currently, as you've heard, the language automatically invokes a statewide prohibition on a transportation network company's ability to use dynamic pricing the moment the Governor declares a state of emergency anywhere in the state. It doesn't take into account the unique and variable nature of states of emergencies. As you all know, Nebraska is a vast state, hundreds of miles east and west, north and south, and an emergency in one area often has no connection to ride demand in another. The reality is that states of emergency are declared for lots of different reasons, many of which do not impact

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Transportation and Telecommunications Committee January 20, 2026
Rough Draft

road safety, ridership demand, or transportation availability. These could include things such as administrative emergencies only, or agricultural droughts, or an avian flu epidemic. A wholesale prohibition on the use of dynamic pricing simply because some type of emergency has been declared somewhere in the state creates unnecessary friction in the marketplace. It has further complicated-- it's, it's further complicated by the fact, as you heard, that, you know, states of emergency in Nebraska at times sort of don't really end. They might go on for years at a time, therefore just adding to the administrative burden of the entire process. Dynamic pricing is a tool that signals to drivers when and where rides are needed most so that more drivers show up to give more rides. And when this tool is turned off statewide because of a localized or administrative issue, reliability of-- for riders goes down and earning opportunities for drivers is capped. Uber estimates that for every day of a dynamic pricing prohibition, drivers in Nebraska could experience an earnings loss of up to \$10,000 per day in total. LB771 fixes this. Instead of a blanket ban, the bill gives the Governor the discretion to determine whether a specific emergency actually requires a dynamic pricing prohibition on an event-by-event basis. It also gives the Governor the authority to right-size the response, limiting that to a specific impacted area. Importantly, this bill does not remove the Governor's power to protect consumers. The Governor retains the flexibility to enact that prohibition either in the proclamation itself or by a separate executive order, just ensuring we're not imposing statewide restrictions when they are not necessary. And the Governor has already recognized this and on recent-- on many occasions explicitly waives the prohibition on dynamic pricing in his emergency orders today. Thank you so much for the opportunity to testify, and I'd be happy to try and answer any questions.

MOSER: Questions? Let's start with Senator Brandt.

BRANDT: Thank you, Chairman Moser. Thank you Ms. Hassebrook for being here today. How many Uber drivers are there in the state of Nebraska?

KRISTEN HASSEBROOK: Several hundred, but I could follow up with an exact number.

BRANDT: So this \$10,000 a day they collectively lost is really a savings to the riding public. Wouldn't that be a fair statement?

KRISTEN HASSEBROOK: I mean, when you think about transportation network companies, these are Nebraskans who, as you heard Senator

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Transportation and Telecommunications Committee January 20, 2026
Rough Draft

Ballard mention, are maybe doing this to make extra income, as a side gig. I mean, those Nebraskans, you know, are also-- are citizens and want to earn.

BRANDT: And I rec-- recognize you represent the drivers, but the drivers get the money from the riding public. So you kind of opened this can of worms and it's just kind of a, a question. What-- how do you guys determine an Uber-- all of a sudden, that the prices have to go up because the concert's over or the basketball arena is full? How do you, how do you jack tho-- it's New Year's Eve-- what dictates that?

KRISTEN HASSEBROOK: I cannot speak to the specifics of how the dynamic pricing tool actually sort of functions within the app, but I'm certainly happy to follow up with specific-- better, specific answers for you. I'm not--

BRANDT: No. I would-- I'm just kind of curious just to learn more about that, on how that works. I know I've had, had people complain about it, and, and not necessarily in Nebraska, but in some other cities that they've been in, that the difference between 6:00 and midnight, the price doubles on stuff, and, and they're just kind of taken aback by that.

KRISTEN HASSEBROOK: If I might.

BRANDT: Yeah.

KRISTEN HASSEBROOK: I think a-- a nice way to think about dynamic pricing is that it's supply meeting demand. If there's high demand, that's-- you know, prices rise so that your supply increases to meet that demand, and you know, it sort of shifts after that. If, if the, you know, some-- I think that's a--

BRANDT: So there really is no regulation on your industry right now. You can do whatever you want.

KRISTEN HASSEBROOK: We are required to-- we are regulated by the Public Service Commission. There are requirements on vehicle parameters. There's all-- we're also required to turn over fair-- like rate estimates to the PSC, as well.

BRANDT: So the, the PSC regulates your rate structure on how much--

KRISTEN HASSEBROOK: No, they do not. This-- the P--

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Transportation and Telecommunications Committee January 20, 2026
Rough Draft

BRANDT: -- you can move on a daily basis?

KRISTEN HASSEBROOK: The TNC statutes actually specifically state, so let the Legislature pass statutes that say they're not-- they do not regulate our rates, but we do turn over rate information to them. And the positive about rideshare, as many-- if everyone's been in one. I mean, consumers, riders, see that price up front. They see a fair estimate. They select and say, yes, I accept. I-- you know-- they see that up front. They see that disclosure and have that opportunity to make a decision on do I want something faster? Am I willing to wait? Do I want something larger? So the consumers see all of that information up front and make a conscious decision on their own to engage.

BRANDT: All right. Thank you.

MOSER: So just a followup to Senator Brandt's question about not having regulation. Right now, if there's an open declaration of, of emergency, you can't raise prices for the College World Series?

KRISTEN HASSEBROOK: If there was a state of emer-- yeah, a state of emergency that had been declared and the Governor had not proactively waived the dynamic pricing statute in the executive order, yes.

MOSER: Yeah. OK.

KRISTEN HASSEBROOK: If that makes sense. And we are regulated to the PS, I mean, there's, you know, vehicle requirements, licensing requirements, insurance requirements.

MOSER: Oh, sure. Yeah, no. But there is a problem to talk about is what I was getting at.

KRISTEN HASSEBROOK: Yeah.

MOSER: Senator Fredrickson.

FREDRICKSON: Thank you, Chair Moser. Thank you for being here, for your testimony. So I, I, I feel like I'm a broken record here but I'm really trying to understand. So, so the current statute that we are getting rid of in this bill says dynamic pricing shall not be permitted during any state of emergency declared by the Governor. Understand that. It sounds like, to me, the next step that is most logical would be dynamic pricing is applied to the counties declare-- or, or is prohibited in the counties declared where the emergency is

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Transportation and Telecommunications Committee January 20, 2026
Rough Draft

but, but permitted elsewhere in the state. What I'm reading this to say is that it is permitted no matter what, unless the Governor makes that additional step to "prohibit" it in the emergency counties. And that, to me, is like where I'm kind of struggling with this. Like, why don't we just automatically permit it where the emergency itself is?

KRISTEN HASSEBROOK: So there's 2 reasons. First, as we've highlighted, kind of that indefinite timeline where you could be setting up, you know, multiple years then, where you're still having this, like they're paying the bills, but the act of emergency's o-- you know, over, so just like that lag, you know, piece of ad-- of administrative burden. But second of all, oftentimes states of emergency, like I mentioned, don't have anything to do with riders or drivers on the road-- like I mentioned, maybe an agricultural drought situation, where, you know, open burns are restricted. That's not really tied to whether or not there's-- dynamic pricing should be prohibited, yet an executive order saying this is a state of emergency because of that would effectively disallow dynamic pricing. Does that make sense?

FREDRICKSON: It makes sense, yeah. I, I guess my-- yeah. My, my, sort of, rub with this is, is that I do think that there should be some safeguard in place automatically, in those specific areas. I'm just thinking about Omaha, for example, where this could be problematic, where it, where it requires the additional step. I, I, I, I support the idea of it not being statewide. I just don't like the idea of it being permitted no matter what unless the Governor takes an additional step to prohibit it. That, that seems to just sort of get rid of the progress we've made on this previously.

KRISTEN HASSEBROOK: I'm not actually aware of, you know-- I don't believe that there's been a, you know, significant, you know-- complaints around the states of emergency-- you know, the, the waiving of I mean, of those sorts of things.

FREDRICKSON: Sure.

KRISTEN HASSEBROOK: So-- but happy to follow up quick on that.

FREDRICKSON: Thank you.

MOSER: Senator Guereca.

GUERECA: Thank you, Ms. Hassebrook, for coming in. So I guess maybe you can answer my question. If we have 12 open emergency

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Transportation and Telecommunications Committee January 20, 2026
Rough Draft

proclamations, how is surge pricing still allowed currently in Nebraska?

KRISTEN HASSEBROOK: Because in those declarations, someone from the rideshare industry or NEMA has said, hey, remember, we, we have to waive dynamic pricing in this executive order or it goes into effect. And so, that is sort of an, an additional administrative burden that the industry is then navigating or asking the Governor to follow up and do it, you know, late, you know, if it slips. That's what's happening now, is this kind of running around.

GUERECA: Gotcha. So then the Governor-- can the Governor then, let's say there-- a tornado hits, I don't know, like Omaha, when they hit and end up in west Omaha. The Governor could-- if Senator Ballard's-- if this bill passes, the Governor could say, in Dodge and Sarpy County, there is a ban on dynamic pricing. And then a month later, 2 weeks later, once the active emergency is quashed, he can then rescind that ban, that prohibition?

KRISTEN HASSEBROOK: I don't-- I would assume so, but could-- certainly happy to check on that for you.

GUERECA: OK. Thanks.

MOSER: Senator Bosn.

BOSN: Thank you. Ms. Hassebrook, have you had the chance to read the online comment that was submitted in regards to this?

KRISTEN HASSEBROOK: No, I have not.

BOSN: OK.

KRISTEN HASSEBROOK: They're not accessible to me.

BOSN: Fair enough. One of the-- it, it may-- I think it answers some of the questions my colleagues had, but it's fair to say that in dynamic-- when you squash dynamic pricing and you say, you can only charge this much, is it fair to say Uber loses drivers?

KRISTEN HASSEBROOK: Yeah. Right. Right. We-- Uber does not tell any driver when to drive, how long to drive, so if drivers feel like they're not-- their earning capacity is not, you know, what they want, they can just select out of the system. Absolutely, and likely do.

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Transportation and Telecommunications Committee January 20, 2026
Rough Draft

BOSN: So the consequence of having dynamic pricing is you-- when you need more drivers at midnight on New Year's Eve--

KRISTEN HASSEBROOK: Yeah. You get more drivers.

BOSN: --if you pay them better, they're likely to show up. But if we start telling them you get to make \$4 for this ride, you can't force them to show up.

KRISTEN HASSEBROOK: Yeah.

BOSN: Thank you.

MOSER: OK. Any other questions? Thank you for your testimony. Appreciate that. We did receive one proponent comment online, as Senator Bosn was mentioning. Anybody else here to speak in favor of LB771? Anyone here to speak in opposition to LB771? Is there anyone here in the neutral? Senator Ballard, you can close if you'd like.

BALLARD: Thank you. Thank you, committee, for the, for the questions and the, the dialogue. Really appreciate it, and make sure we get this right. I just want to make sure-- I, I believe this is streamlining the dynamic prices when dealing with national declarations of emergency. Willing to work with the committee if they need some, some technical tweaking of the language. Willing work with the committee and, and NEMA, to make sure that's the right fit. But I'd be happy to answer any additional questions, if the committee has any.

MOSER: OK, any other questions? OK, seeing none, thank you, Senator.

BALLARD: Thank you, Chair. Thank you.

MOSER: Appreciate that. All right. That'll close our hearing on LB771. Next up, we have LB738, Senator Rountree.

_____ : He's on the way.

MOSER: OK. On LB738, we have 7 proponent comments received, 1 opponent comment, and 2 neutral comments. Welcome, Senator.

ROUNTREE: Thank you so much, Mr. Chair.

MOSER: Yes, have a seat and tell us about your bill.

ROUNTREE: Oh, that's hot.

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Transportation and Telecommunications Committee January 20, 2026
Rough Draft

MOSER: Somebody warmed it up for you. Welcome.

ROUNTREE: Thank you so much. Well, good afternoon, Chair Moser, and members of the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee. My name is Victor Rountree. That's V-i-c-t-o-r R-o-u-n-t-r-e-e, and I represent District 3, which is made up of Bellevue and Papillion. Today, I'm here to introduce LB738, which would create a license plate honoring the service of women veterans. Over the interim, I was approached by the Disabled American Veterans and AMVETS about the possibility of introducing this legislation. It is important that we honor the hard work, dedication, and the sacrifices that women veterans in our state have made. I've served with so many strong women during my time in the Air Force, and each and every one of them is worthy of recognition. LB738 directs the Department of Motor Vehicles to work with the nongovernment organization to design the plate. I believe that DAV and AMVETS have worked to create some draft designs that have been supported by women veterans in our state. They're depicting a woman veteran with the phrases women veterans and honoring her service. The bill also creates the Women Veterans Cash Fund and directs money gained from sale of the plate to this fund. That cash fund is designated for events that focus on women veterans in our state and is administered by the Department of Veteran Affairs. I appreciate your attention to this bill today and ask for your vote out of committee. There are some great testifiers who can speak to the support for this plate in the community and how we got here today. I thank all the amazing women serving our country today and all the women who have served in the past. Your service protects our state and our country and ensures that our freedoms that we take for granted are never infringed upon. And with that, I'm open to any questions.

MOSER: OK. Are there questions? Yes, Senator Fredrickson.

FREDRICKSON: Thank you, Chair Moser. Thank you, Senator Rountree, for being here, for bringing this bill. Congrats on the first license plate bill of 2026. You mentioned that there were, there were a couple of designs mocked up. Are you able to share those designs with the committee or have you seen those designs?

ROUNTREE: We did see a couple when we were bringing the bill forward, and so there may be an opportunity later on in that [INAUDIBLE].

FREDRICKSON: Thank you.

MOSER: OK. Other questions from committee? Senator Fredrickson.

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Transportation and Telecommunications Committee January 20, 2026
Rough Draft

FREDRICKSON: I had one more question I forgot to ask. You mentioned this-- it would establish a Women's Veterans Cash Fund and the funds therefore would go towards events related to women veterans in our state. Who, who would administer or oversee those funds?

ROUNTREE: That would probably be with our DAV.

FREDRICKSON: DAV. OK.

ROUNTREE: Department of Veteran Affairs, as well.

FREDRICKSON: OK. Thank you.

MOSER: I was just reading one of the comments by somebody who submitted an email comment. They said-- they wondered why we would have a plate for females when there's already a veteran plate for veterans. Why would there be a need for a special one for women?

ROUNTREE: It would just separate to honor their service. My daughter is a veteran. She was an Air Force major who retired with-- medical retire with multiple sclerosis. So she was not able to fulfill that 20-year career. And she's in the state of Colorado. I do have on my phone a Colorado women veterans license plate. When she got there, she was able to get that and procure it, and I think it really honors their service. And then the second part-- you know, when our female veterans park in, sometimes, their veteran-reserved parking spaces, they get challenged quite a bit. You might see some of that testimony in there, as well, that say, hey, did your husband serve? Did you-- and certain things like that. So they are just as much veterans as we are, but it helps to denote, as well, and I think it's just a great honor.

MOSER: OK.

ROUNTREE: That's about a question for the individual, but it, it honors. And I was surprised when I looked at the bill that we are changing, looking at all the different types of license plates that are out there.

MOSER: We've got a bunch.

ROUNTREE: We've got a bunch. We got, we got an otter. I didn't know about the otter. But [INAUDIBLE]. So we have some. Yes. Mm-hmm.

MOSER: Yeah, we've got another bill after yours.

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Transportation and Telecommunications Committee January 20, 2026
Rough Draft

ROUNTREE: OK. All right.

MOSER: So we'll have 2 more in about a month. Any other questions?
Senator Bosn.

BOSN: Thank you. Thank you, Senator Rountree.

ROUNTREE: Yes, ma'am.

BOSN: Did you have a chance to read the online comment submitted by Rhonda Lahm, the Nebraska Department of-- from the Nebraska Department of Motor Vehicles, asking if you would amend the effective date to a later time so they can accommodate that? Are you open to that?

ROUNTREE: That was a question. I did see that just before coming in. I saw the letter and so forth, [INAUDIBLE] I thought it might be a committee amendment. We would like to have the plate and implement it in the best way possible. Sometimes haste makes waste and we don't get it right, so if-- testifiers behind me would testify to that. But I'm willing to work with what we need to do to get the plate and we can implement it in the best way. Last year, I brought the bill to exempt disabled veterans from the taxation. And that was just taken into effect on the first of January this month. So, got an implementation.

MOSER: OK. Any other questions? Thank you, Senator. Appreciate your appearance before us today.

ROUNTREE: Thank you so much.

MOSER: Anyone here to speak in support of LB738? Our 2 pages today are Sydney and Kleh. We appreciate their service to help us during the hearing. Welcome.

MELISSA ALLEN: Thank you. So, Senator Moser and Senator Ballard, my name is Melissa Allen. It's M-e-l-i-s-s-a, Allen, A-l-l-e-n, and-- providing testimony in support of the bill. So, I am going to start with Laura Comas. She was a female veteran in Tennessee. And back in 2006, she, you know, saw all of the veteran plates that were within her state and wondered why there wasn't one for women. So she had brought the idea to the Tennessee Senators Doug Overbey and Tim Burchett, and they filed a bill in Tennessee on February 14, 2007, and that bill was a success, and every woman representative and senator signed on as co-sponsors for that bill. And that bill became law in June-- sorry-- 2007. So that was the first women veterans plate. There's now 18 of them. And I did throw this in because it was kind of

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Transportation and Telecommunications Committee January 20, 2026
Rough Draft

fun to note. Wisconsin, so according to the data that I could find, has the most expensive women veterans license plate. So yearly, it is \$75 for any specialty plate in Wisconsin. And if you want the woman veteran designation, that's another \$15, and if you want a customized message, that's \$15. And I can tell you I would pay it. So maybe we need to price that. But-- and then fast forward another 11 years, and it was the Second Annual Nebraska Women Veterans Symposium that we hold in Kearney every year. And there's a lot of social time and gathering, and the idea came up. And it came up the next year, and the idea was brought to the Nebraska Veterans Council. And I am the liaison for the Nebraska Veterans Council, so I brought it to Senator Rountree. And at this past Nebraska Women Veterans Symposium, it was the last-- I was the last speaker of the weekend, and the women were thrilled that it was maybe going to be a possibility. And then, just to quote the Governor of Virginia at the time: it's not that we want to separate ourselves from male veterans, but rather, join the other 11 states that have the specialty plates to honor women veterans. At the time, it was 11. So I've attached a copy. The first 2 are examples of the Nebraska plates that were worked up, and then just a couple examples. I threw Colorado in there. That is Senator Rountree's daughter. That's the plate she has. And of course, Tennessee, the first one, and just a variety of those. And thank you, Senators and members of the committee, for letting me testify.

MOSER: All right. Thank you. Are there questions from the committee? Senator Guereca.

GUERECA: Thank you for being here, Ms. Allen. Thank you for your service to our country.

MELISSA ALLEN: Thank you.

GUERECA: These are some cool mock-ups. I really like that first one. That's a, that's a nice one right there.

MELISSA ALLEN: Everybody really likes the first one. So.

GUERECA: Yeah, that's, that's a good one. Well, I just want to say thank you for your service. And hopefully, we can get this done.

MELISSA ALLEN: Thank you.

MOSER: Other questions? Senator Brandt.

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Transportation and Telecommunications Committee January 20, 2026
Rough Draft

BRANDT: Thank you, Chairman Moser. Thank you for your service. Which branch--

MELISSA ALLEN: Thank you.

BRANDT: --did you serve in?

MELISSA ALLEN: Army. Hooah.

BRANDT: Is there, is there any way to do this so that the women can have the Army, Air Force, Navy, Marines, whatever branch they were in and have that incorporated on the plate also, or is that getting too complex?

MELISSA ALLEN: I think with, with the panel that we're going to set up to design it, it's then working with the DMV, because Nebraska has to be so visible on the plate, so it's just a matter of working that in there. Some states, as you'll see by the example, have the branch of service with "woman veteran" underneath so it's still their branch that they served but it still designates them as woman veteran. So, all that is-- the DMV can be kind of strict on the designs. So.

BRANDT: All right. Thank you.

MELISSA ALLEN: You're welcome.

MOSER: Any other questions? All right, well thank you so much for your testimony today.

MELISSA ALLEN: And then can I just add, I know you had asked about the, the timeline of pushing that back. Was that you that asked, Senator Rountree? So I know the women veterans would be fine with that. I, I don't know of one veteran that's not excited to get it. So if we had to wait patiently, we would, just as long as I'm online at midnight to get that-- hooah-- the first plate. So.

MOSER: Thank you.

MELISSA ALLEN: Thank you.

MOSER: Thank you. Anybody else to speak in support? Welcome.

DESIREE WINELAND: Thank you. Chairman Moser and the members of the committee. My name is Desiree Wineland, Delta-Echo-Sierra-India-Romeo-Echo-Echo, Wineland,

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Transportation and Telecommunications Committee January 20, 2026
Rough Draft

Whiskey-India-November-Echo-Lima-Alpha-November-Delta. I respectfully submit this statement for the legislative record in my capacity as the Women's Military Memorial Ambassador for the great state of Nebraska in support of LB738, as introduced by Senator Rountree and in recognition of the Nebraska Women Veterans License Plate. The introduction of LB738 and the availability of the Nebraska Women's Veterans License Plates represents an important and timely acknowledgement of the service of women veterans throughout the state of Nebraska. For decades, women have served honorably in the Armed Forces in the United States in operational, leadership, medical, aviation, and support roles, both domestically and abroad. Their contributions have been an integral part to the missions' success and our national defense. The women that cry-- I mean the women battle cry of "Go Big Red" is never unanswered on the battlefield, and we're a close-knit group. I also support the statement for personal experience from, from completing 24 years of active-duty military service. Throughout my career, I've served alongside Nebraska women veterans whose professionalism, leadership, and commitment reflect the highest traditions in military service. Historically, the women of service veterans are not always visibly recognized following their return to civilian life. LB738 and the Nebraska Women's License Plate provide a public and a permanent acknowledgement that women served, sacrificed, and continue to serve with distinction. This form of recognition affirms the value of their contributions and ensures that their service is approx-- approp-- appropriately acknowledged within the Nebraska communities. In addition to honoring women, current and former service members, their designation carries lasting educational and generational implications. It imply-- it affirms that military service has always included women and their role in defending our nation and is established in an enduring part of Nebraska's history. On behalf of the Women's Military Memorial, the Veterans of-- VF-- Foreign Wars, and a, and a member of the American Legion, past, present and future, I respectfully thank Senator Rountree for introducing LB738 and the Nebraska legislator for-- Legislature, for its leadership and rec--consideration in recognizing the service of women veterans through their designation. Thank you for the opportunity to submit this statement for inclusion in the official records. Respectfully submitted. Thank you.

BALLARD: Thank you so much for your testimony and being here. Are there any questions? Seeing none-- oh, Senator Bosn.

BOSN: I just want to thank you for your service, probably on behalf of all of us.

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Transportation and Telecommunications Committee January 20, 2026
Rough Draft

DESIREE WINELAND: Well, thank you.

BOSN: Thank you.

DESIREE WINELAND: I appreciate that.

BALLARD: Thank you so much. Any additional proponents for LB738? Seeing none, anyone in the opposit-- in opposition? Seeing none, anyone in the neutral capacity? Seeing none, Senator Rountree, would you like to close?

ROUNTREE: Thank you so much, Vice Chair Ballard and all the members of the TNT committee. Thank you for hearing us today and thank you for my testifiers that have come to speak. As I get ready to close, I just wanted to read-- as you've read all the comments, but I want to read this one for the record, from Kathleen Swiatek. And it says: I served 29 years in the U.S. Army. During those 29 years, I was consistently treated differently than my male peers. They were acknowledged and applauded while I was pushed aside and had to prove I was a service member every time we went out. Even now, when I wear veteran hats and shirts, strangers ask, oh, did your husband serve? My son is used to people mistakenly thanking him for his nonexistent service when he is standing next to me and I ask for a veteran's discount. It is time for women veterans to be recognized. This woman veteran plate will reinforce the acknowledgment of female veterans. We served, and our service deserves to be recognized. So, a lot of good comments in here, but it's a greatly supported opportunity. So committee, I do ask that-- for your full support on this so we can advance this one out of the committee and gather recognition to our women veter-- veterans that they deserve. And thank you so much for hearing me today.

BALLARD: Thank you, Senator Rountree. Any additional questions? Seeing none, thank you for being here and bringing LB738.

ROUNTREE: All right. Thank you so much.

BALLARD: That'll close our hearing on LB738. That'll open up our hearing on LB769, Senator DeKay.

DeKAY: Ready?

BALLARD: Whenever you are.

DeKAY: All right. Good afternoon, members of the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee. For the record, my name is Senator Barry

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Transportation and Telecommunications Committee January 20, 2026
Rough Draft

DeKay, B-a-r-r-y D-e-K-a-y. I represent District 40 in northeast Nebraska. I am here today to introduce LB769. LB769 would establish the University of Nebraska State Museum License Plates. For many young students, their first exposure to the University of Nebraska, aside from Husker athletics, is a school trip to Morrill Hall to accompany their tour of the State Capitol and other landmarks that are here in Lincoln. For many students out in rural Nebraska, they may also visit Ashfall Fossil Beds, which is located in Antelope County, or Trailside Museum, which is located at Fort Robinson, near Crawford. LB769 represents an opportunity for Nebraskans to show their support for our state's primary land-grant research institution by recognizing these museums. LB769 would require the Nebraska Department of Motor Vehicles to issue no more than 3 designs for the University of Nebraska State Museum License Plates. Each plate would recognize the 3 museums managed by the University of Nebraska: Ashfall Fossil Beds, Morrill Hall, and Trailside Museum. Regarding the design of the license plates, the department would be required to consult with both the University of Nebraska and a nonprofit with a mission to support the University of Nebraska in education and research. I do want to add that the Friends of the University of Nebraska State Museum is a nonprofit that helped prepare the 3 proposed license plate designs that I passed out earlier-- one for each of the 3 museums. The constituent who initially brought this idea to me is a member of that nonprofit organization, but was unable to be here today. Nebraskans applying for the alpha-numeric University of Nebraska State Museums License Plate would be charged a \$5 fee. 100% of that fee would go towards promoting, understanding, appreciation, and stewardship of the science and natural history through research, public education, and outreach at the museums managed by the University of Nebraska. Meanwhile, the fee for personalized message license plates would be \$40. 25% of that fee would go to the DMV Cash Fund and the other 75% would go to the University. This allocation of fees is modeled off of how the Arbor Day license plate bill was drafted last year. LB769 would also create the University of Nebraska State Museum License Plate Cash Fund. Any proceeds designated to the University from the issuance of these plates would be remitted, remitted to this fund. The fund would be administered by the Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska for the purpose-- purposes I just described. Additionally, I would like to briefly highlight that I did work with the Department of Motor Vehicles before the start of the session to set the effective date of the bill to January 1, 2027. This date was recommended by the DMV, and gives them time to implement the bill. Following me are a few testifiers who can provide additional information about the University

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Transportation and Telecommunications Committee January 20, 2026
Rough Draft

of Nebraska State Museum System and share their perspective on the positive impacts this bill would have for their system and the broader, and the broader University of Nebraska. With that, I would be happy to try to answer any questions. Thank you.

BALLARD: Thank you, Senator DeKay. Are there any questions? So just to make sure I understand this cash fund correctly. So it's-- cash fund, 75% goes to the University, to administer, and it's for promotion of Morrill Hall or-- and Ash Falls [SIC]. Do I understand that?

DeKAY: It, it would be a promotion of the 3 state museums, Ashfall Fossil Beds, Morrill Hall, and Trailside Museum, out at Fort Robinson.

BALLARD: So they have to use the funds for that purpose.

DeKAY: Yeah, yes.

BALLARD: Not for operations, not for-- OK.

DeKAY: No. This is totally-- the revenue generated off of this would totally go to the museum system and the University.

BALLARD: OK. Thank you.

MOSER: All right. Senator Storer.

STORER: Thank you, Chairman Moser. Just to follow up on Senator Ballard's question. Is it-- that'll be determined-- the distribution to those museums will be determined by the Regents then? They just kind of set up--

DeKAY: Yep. Yep.

STORER: --the system for how the monies are distributed out to those?

DeKAY: Yes.

STORER: OK.

MOSER: OK. Other questions from the committee? OK. Thank you, Senator. Anybody here to speak in support of LB769? Welcome.

CHLOE SWEET: Hello. My name is Chloe Sweet. Thank you, guys, for having me. It's spelled C-h-l-o-e S-w-e-e-t, and I am a board member of the Friends of the State Museum, a 501(c) (3) formed in 1983, with a mission to advocate and fundraise for the museum. I am here as a

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Transportation and Telecommunications Committee January 20, 2026
Rough Draft

proponent for LB769 as a means of supporting the museum, raising awareness of the 3 public locations the bill license plates would support across Nebraska. This year, the museum is celebrating its 155th anniversary, Ashfall Fossil Bed is celebrating its 35th anniversary, and the Trailside Museum, its 65th year. The commissioning of license plates would highlight the decades of work to promote the discovery of natural history and world cultures in Nebraska. Having been born and raised in Lincoln, I first became inspired and educated by visiting the Morrill Hall, or as we called it, "the elephant museum," from a very young age. Some of my first memories are running through the halls or digging up the small fossils from the sand. And later in high school and college, I would go on dates at the planetarium and hearing our favorite music with the laser light shows, and these are just truly memories that I will never forget. And now, I have the pleasure of watching our 3 young children awe at the wonders of history. If you asked me today, if I wasn't in my current career, what I would most enjoy doing, and I would probably say being a paleontologist. And that is, I can wholeheartedly attribute to the passion of this amazing space in Lincoln and the other spaces that promote this work across the straight-- the state. I am so grateful that the legacy continues across the state for kids to continue to be inspired by their first visits to the Trailside Museum or Ashfall Fossil Bed. I know it brings great joy like it did for me and my family to experience the sense of wonder, which comes from seeing the animals who lived in Nebraska long ago. In addition to acting as an important educational resource in rural Nebraska, Ash-- Ashfall Fossil Beds and Trailside Museum have long acted as tourism attractions in their respective areas across the state, attracting visitors from across the globe. To recognize the important role these museums have played in the lives of many Nebraskans, I am asking you to consider supporting LB769. So thank you, guys, so much.

MOSER: All right. Questions from the committee? Senator Fredrickson.

FREDRICKSON: Thank you, Chairman Moser. Thank you for being here, and in your testimony, I, too, have those shared memories of going to Morrill Hall as a very young child, and it's-- I feel like it's just like a core memory of anyone who grew up in Nebraska.

CHLOE SWEET: 100%.

FREDRICKSON: A bit of a difficult-- are you related to Mary Claire Sweet?

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Transportation and Telecommunications Committee January 20, 2026
Rough Draft

CHLOE SWEET: I am.

FREDRICKSON: OK.

CHLOE SWEET: Yes.

FREDRICKSON: She's my neighbor. And I'm like, I heard you [INAUDIBLE] and I'm like--

CHLOE SWEET: I know. I was like, I--

FREDRICKSON: This is like a doppelganger, so--

CHLOE SWEET: Nice to see you.

FREDRICKSON: Good to see. Thank you for being here. [INAUDIBLE].

CHLOE SWEET: Well, the hair and the eye color is different, but-- thank you.

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

CHLOE SWEET: My sister loves Morrill Hall, too.

MOSER: Anybody else to speak in support of LB769? Anybody here to speak in opposition to LB769? Anybody here to speak in neutral? Welcome.

SUSAN WELLER: Thank you. Good afternoon. My name is Susan Weller, S-u-s-a-n W-e-l-l-e-r. I am the director of the University of Nebraska State Museum, which includes Morrill Hall, Trailside Museum, and Ashfall Fossil Beds. I am also a professor of entomology in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources at UNL. My testimony today presents neutral information on the State Museum that is relevant to LB769. The State Museum was established by this Nebraska Legislature in 1871, and in that founding legislation, we were assigned to UNL for our governance. We are the state repository for specimens documenting Nebraska's geology and its past and present biological diversity. We were founded to educate Nebraskans about their natural resources. Morrill Hall opened in 1927 as a public museum to further our mission to educate Nebraskans. Two additional public sites were later created to provide access to our internationally-renowned paleontology collections: the Trailside Museum in 1961, and Ashfall Fossil Beds-- a unique paleontological

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Transportation and Telecommunications Committee January 20, 2026
Rough Draft

site was created in 1991 near Royal, Nebraska. Both Trailside and Ashfall represent active partnerships with Nebraska Game and Parks to encourage tourism and natural history education. Annually, the museum welcomes over 110,000 visitors at its 3 sites, with most, about 90,000, visiting Morrill Hall. We also serve about 30,000 K-12 students, on site and with our digital learning programs. These virtual field trip programs connect museum educators and scientists with rural classrooms and facilitated by the Internet, provide hands-on science education throughout the state. On the final page of our winter annual report, you will see a map of Nebraska which I just point out to you because this is our impact across the state last year. Consequently, the museum's public outreach has sparked an appreciation of the natural world and love of science in many Nebraskans. And given this love and support of our museums, I believe these license plates will be popular and have the added benefit of highlighting the unique fossils of each site. The state fossil, Archie, is proposed to represent Morrill Hall-- Senator DeKay gave you examples of these earlier-- battling rhinos for Ashfall Fossil Beds, and then last but not least, our premier carnivore for Nebraska, Barbourofelis, who was a cat-like predator who roamed the plains about 12 to 7 million years ago. We hope that these license plates will draw attention to these areas and other attractions so that our rural communities will have more tourism dollars and, of course, the appreciation and love of science will flourish. I thank you for your time, and I'd be happy to answer your questions.

MOSER: Senator Storer.

STORER: Thank you, Chairman Moser, and thank you for being here. I, I guess I just have one, and I don't know if this is something that you're able to answer or not, but curious, again, about how the funds-- the revenue that's generated off of the license plates is anticipated to be distributed amongst the 3 museums.

SUSAN WELLER: So the University of Nebraska State Museum is the, the overarching museum, and the 3 sites report to me. And so, as you can see from our budget, we receive roughly 30% of our income from the University as state-aided dollars, and then the remainder being earned revenue and gifts grants. So the Board of Regents would be responsible for directing the dollars to the University of Nebraska State Museum, and then we distribute in support of the education programs and exhibits at the 3 sites. And we are-- for those of you from western Nebraska, we are in the process of renovating the Clash of the

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Transportation and Telecommunications Committee January 20, 2026
Rough Draft

Mammoths exhibit. So we do take care of our-- of all 3 sites. They're my 3 children.

STORER: I appreciate that. So just to dig into that just a little deeper, is that distribution sort of the, the individual museum-- sort of put in a grant, or in essence a grant? I know it would not be a grant technically, but bring you expenses to submit in a request for those dollars, or is it-- do you anticipate those be distributed equally amongst the 3 museums or is it based on overall revenue? Is there some formula?

SUSAN WELLER: Is-- as all 3-- is-- we're really gonna dive into detail weeds, but the 3 sites are budgetarily one budget.

STORER: OK.

SUSAN WELLER: And so we ensure that we have the resources at all 3 sites to be successful. And, and I think beyond that, maybe we can sit down and I can, can go through it with you. But that-- think of it as a family budget. And you've got your 3 kids, and you make sure that they have what they need to be successful.

STORER: And you always have the middle child that doesn't think they get enough.

SUSAN WELLER: Yes, we do.

STORER: All right. Thank you.

MOSER: Senator Brandt.

BRANDT: Thank you, Chairman Moser. Thank you Dr. Weller. I've been to all 3 of these museums and they're simply outstanding for a state our size. I mean, we, we punch over our weight. What's the coolest thing we've ever dug up in the state of Nebraska?

SUSAN WELLER: Oh, my word. I will get in such trouble with our paleontologist if I choose one. But I think our state fossil, Archie, is by far and away the most amazing find. And you know he was found by chickens.

BRANDT: No, I did not know that.

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Transportation and Telecommunications Committee January 20, 2026
Rough Draft

SUSAN WELLER: Yep. He was found by chickens in Lincoln County, and they were pecking away and the farmer was like, what's up? And the next thing you know, there's a mammoth coming out of the ground.

BRANDT: OK. Thank you.

MOSER: And they were getting their calcium by eating some \$10 million-- 10-million-year-old fossil. OK. Any other questions? Thank you for your testimony. Appreciate it.

SUSAN WELLER: Thank you.

MOSER: Anybody else to speak in the neutral? All right. Senator DeKay. So we received 2 proponent emails, no opponent, and no neutral. Senator.

DeKAY: Thank you. I want to thank the people who came to testify on this bill today. Again, this bill would recognize some of the extensive academic and scientific work being done by the University of Nebraska, especially at its museums. As you heard from the testimony that came after my opening, the University of Nebraska museums have an incredible state impact-- statewide impact, whether it be in Crawford, Antelope County, or the Lincoln, Omaha metro area. This bill is an opportunity to continue to recognize and support their work, and the use of those funds for promoting and understanding the appreciation and stewards-- stewardship of science and natural history through research and public education and outreach at the museum is managed by UNL, and I would support-- I guess there would be support going forward to work on those projects in how they deem necessary. With that, I appreciate a favorable consideration for LB769, and would be happy to try to answer any other questions. Thank you.

MOSER: So are there questions? Are any of these sites in your district?

DeKAY: Ashfall is, yeah. It's west of Creighton, between Creighton and O'Neill. So it-- Ashfall, from where I live, is about 25 miles as the crow flies. So driving by highway, it is about 40 miles away.

MOSER: Mm-hmm. Cool. I took my grandson to the museum here and he was amazed at the, the size of the specimens they have on display there.

DeKAY: Well, the thing that's been buried over the years-- millions of years, including seeing, you know, Archie down at Morrill Hall is very

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Transportation and Telecommunications Committee January 20, 2026
Rough Draft

fascinating to what is under the ground in the state of Nebraska, from millions of years ago from when this was the great Nebraska Sea.

MOSER: Yeah. Questions from other committee members? Thank you very much, Senator. Appreciate your appearance with us today.

DeKAY: Thank you.

MOSER: Thank you. All right, that will conclude our hearing for today. Thank you for attending.