

CLERK: Madame Chair, with respect to LB 626, it was a bill introduced by the Speaker at the request of the Governor. (Read title.) The bill was first read on March 24. It was referred to the Banking Committee for hearing. The bill was advanced to General File. There are Banking, Commerce and Insurance Committee amendments pending.

SENATOR MARSH: Senator DeCamp.

SENATOR DeCAMP: Mr. President, I would move adoption of the committee amendments. Very briefly, this is the NIFA proposal of the Governor a couple of weeks ago. It is now on the floor and now before you, committee amendments.... well let me explain what the bill does and then the amendments might make sense. The bill simply consolidates the three existing funds into one board and director so you have some more efficiency and hopefully expanded use of it and it expands the authority of these funds to industrial or commercial enterprises. That is really the essence of it. The theory behind it is one of the major. . . is somebody hollering at me? One of the major goals of it is to provide financing for business, agriculture, these kind of things in the state and the Governor and a number of people including myself felt that whether you agree or disagree with the concept of these bonds ever being used in the first place, it is a fact of life, right or wrong, good or bad, that this state and other states are doing it and it is a way of providing competitive financing, competitive interest rates to the private sector and I guess maybe it is necessary because that is what everybody else is doing. I hate to use that argument but that's it and this just tries to make it more efficient, more effective, so on. Now the amendments then do the following. They replace the Director of Policy Research with the Director of Agriculture as an ex-officio member of the authority. They designate that a person experienced in agricultural production be appointed, be an appointed public member of the authority. They strike original section something or other, which includes under the definition of "project", the new construction or rehabilitation of commercial or business enterprises. They strike original section 45 which would allow any utility to act as agent in originating process or administering energy conservation loans and would allow all public utilities notwithstanding laws to the contrary to receive funds and extend loans pursuant to this act. They allow the rules and regulations of the Mortgage Finance Fund, the Agricultural Development Corporation and the Development Finance Fund to continue to remain in effect until amended, repealed or replaced by the new NIFA and there are some other technical clarifying amendments. That is the committee amendments. I move their adoption and then we can discuss the bill itself in further detail.