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LB 329, 499, 658

Natural Resources Committee that advanced out of the Resources Committee without objection. One of them was Senator Schellpeper's bill, LB 329, and the other was a...was a portion of Senator Tyson's bill, LB 499. And I think what I would like to do, there...there are generally just two concepts, and I'm going to call upon Senator Schellpeper to explain his concept first and grant him a portion of the opening on the bill. And if you want to orient yourself, the actual meat of his amendment is on page 7 of the amendment, down towards the bottom where public power districts are empowered to do some additional things, which Senator Schellpeper will explain to you.

SENATOR CROSBY: Senator Schellpeper.

SENATOR SCHELLPEPER: Yes, thank you, Madam Chairman and members. LB 329, which is part of this bill now is, the primary purpose is to give the state's public power districts a clear mandate to participate in a variety of federal rural economic development loan and grant programs. The primary programs are interested in that they're interested in are the Rural Economic Development Zero Interest Loan Program, and the Rural Economic Development Grant Program, and they're offered through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Business and Cooperative Development Service. Since the inception of these programs in the late 1980s and early 1990s, there's been 547 loans and grants totaling almost 109 million have been made through rural electric and rural telephone systems for economic development projects around the country. These programs makes these money available for the establishment of new businesses, expansion of existing businesses, industrial park development, and other economic development projects in rural areas. If this amendment is adopted and becomes law, Public Power District could serve as the agency to obtain these funds to provide grants or zero interest loans for local economic development initiatives. I would ask that this be made part of LB 658. Thank you.

SENATOR CROSBY: Thank you, Senator Schellpeper. Senator Beutler, there is one light. Did you...did you have...is it all right...

SENATOR BEUTLER: Yes. No, there's...that's the one concept. The other concept constitutes a portion of Senator Tyson's bill,