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FLOOR DEBATE

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SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Chambers. (Visitors introduced.) Senator Kristensen, you're recognized on AM1205 to LB 827.

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: Thank you, Mr. President and members of the Legislature. Senator Chambers, I think issued some questions and I have an opinion and I think an observation concerning the fiber, and I know Senator Chambers isn't here but I'm sure he's listening. I'm sorry, you...you and Senator Stuhr look so much alike, I did...couldn't tell you apart. (laughter) You asked Senator Bromm that the telephone companies weren't laying fiber, weren't going to go to these places, and I don't think that's true. What we're talking about in most cases is the power companies want to go to additional places and they go...they want to go to those places because they are convenient to go to. It is similar, I think, to building another interstate. The interstate is there but they want to build a redundant system. In other words, LES here wants to go to a particular business, not for the primary service, because there's someone already there. There's already lines that lead to that facility. Think of that as an interstate. The average home doesn't have the interstate have an exit ramp right into their driveway. There has to be other smaller primary roads. We call those the last miles. They're easier to put in but, quite frankly, it's expensive to do. It's much easier because if you charge people to drive down the interstate, they're a captive audience, it's easy to do. If you want to build a line out to Senator Jones' ranch, it's expensive to do that, long miles, there aren't many people that would use that line to pay for it, it's just got a higher cost. Generally what the power industry has done is they...they began by saying, we're just putting in these lines for our own internal usage. Now we have a little extra. So if we have this little extra, we want to lease them or give them to someone. It's not a matter of them going to areas where there is not existing fiber at today. In the case of LES, I think what that company wanted was a backup system in case the lines were cut, or in case there was not reliable service, they had someone else they could count on. I think that's going to occur here. But the debate really I think is, do you allow them to build additional surplus things with ratepayer money and then be