

**ONE HUNDRED NINTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION - 2026**  
**COMMITTEE STATEMENT**  
**LR298CA**

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**Hearing Date:** Thursday February 19, 2026  
**Committee On:** Natural Resources  
**Introducer:** Brandt  
**One Liner:** Constitutional amendment to create requirements for the use of the Nebraska Environmental Trust Fund

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**Roll Call Vote - Final Committee Action:**  
Advanced to General File with amendment(s)

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**Vote Results:**

**Aye:** 8 Senators Brandt, Clouse, Conrad, DeKay, Hughes, Juarez, Moser, Raybould  
**Nay:**  
**Absent:**  
**Present Not Voting:**

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**Testimony:**

**Proponents:**

Senator Tom Brandt  
Anne DeVries  
Traci Bruckner  
Katie Torpy  
John Bender  
Danny Kloock  
Matthew Gruntorad  
Alex McKiernan  
Russ Soucheck  
Carmen Miller  
Al Davis  
Katie Lamke

**Representing:**

Opening Presenter  
Self  
Audubon Great Plains  
Nature Conservancy  
Friends of the Nebraska Environmental Trust  
Ducks Unlimited  
Nebraska Chapter of The Wildlife Society  
Self  
Nebraska Wildlife Federation  
Ducks Unlimited  
Nebraska Chapter of the Sierra Club  
Xerces Society

**Opponents:**

**Representing:**

**Neutral:**

Shelly Kelly

**Representing:**

Sandhills Task Force

\* ADA Accommodation Written Testimony

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**Summary of purpose and/or changes:**

LR298CA, introduced by Senator Brandt, would put before voters, at the November 2026 general election, a ballot question of whether an amendment to Article III, section 24, of the Nebraska Constitution should be adopted.

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Article III-24 subsection (3)(a) grants the Legislature the power to authorize and regulate a state lottery and directs that the proceeds of the lottery shall be appropriated by the Legislature for the costs of establishing and maintaining the lottery, and for the other enumerated purposes within the constitution.

Forty-four and one-half percent of the money remaining after the payment of prizes and operating expenses and the initial transfer to the Compulsive Gamblers Assistance Fund shall be transferred to the Nebraska Environmental Trust Fund (Fund).

Proceeds transferred to the Fund must be used as prescribed in the Nebraska Environmental Trust Act (Act). The Legislature's stated purposes of the Act, found in section 81-15,168, are "for the conservation, enhancement, or restoration of the natural physical and biological environment in Nebraska, including the air, land, ground water, surface water, flora and fauna, prairies and forests, wildlife and wildlife habitats, and natural areas of aesthetic or scenic value."

If passed by the voters, LR298CA would require that the Fund be used exclusively for administering the Nebraska Environmental Trust (Trust) and funding competitively awarded grants to tax-exempt entities, Nebraska political subdivisions, or Nebraska state agencies for the enumerated purposes stated in the Act.

LR298CA would also require that a project proposed by a Nebraska state agency shall not be awarded a grant by the Trust unless at least fifty percent of the project's funding is provided by a political subdivision, the federal government, or private donors.

If passed by the Legislature, the proposed amendment shall be submitted to the voters with the following language:

A constitutional amendment to create requirements for the use of the Nebraska Environmental Trust Fund and grants made by the Nebraska Environmental Trust.

For

Against

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**Explanation of amendments:**

The committee adopted AM2400, which strikes language that grants be awarded to tax-exempt entities, political subdivisions, or state agencies and changes the fifty-percent matching funds requirement for state agency projects so that such funding must come from sources other than the Trust, Nebraska state income or sales taxes, or from funds sourced or derived from those taxes.

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Tom Brandt, Chairperson

