

February 8, 1980

LB 701

(Read title to LB 701.) The bill was read on January 10. It was referred to the Public Works Committee. There are no amendments pending.

PRESIDENT: The Chair recognizes Senator Kremer.

SENATOR KREMER: Mr. Chairman and members of the Legislature, this bill is introduced because of my own interest in the tremendous load that we have placed on the members of the Natural Resources Commission. There are fifteen of them. When this Legislature passed LB 595, we assigned to the Commission a tremendous responsibility to have a look at ten issues related to Nebraska's resources that are demanding our careful attention, and we have assigned to them a workload that I think is far beyond what most of us realize. In order to carry out the desire of the Legislature that we look at these ten critical areas, such as water quality, instream flows, transbasin diversion, surface and groundwater rights, supplemental water, transfer of water, and all these things, it is going to take a tremendous amount of dedication and time. Now there has been a strong feeling that it should not be the staff of the Commission that should make these decisions. It should be the Commissioners themselves. Today we are allowing them compensation only to the extent of \$20 per day, which is far below their cost to leave home and come in and familiarize themselves with the issues at hand and carry out their responsibilities to the Legislature. I feel that \$20 is far too short when we ask these people to come in and educate themselves, familiarize themselves, with the issue at hand and then to give this Legislature alternatives and even recommendations. So what we are doing in the bill, we are changing the per diem allowance from \$20 a day to \$50 a day. I know that is quite an adjustment. There are many other board members that receive up in that area of \$50 per day. I don't think we are unreasonable. They would have to come under the limit of \$2,000, and they could not go beyond that no matter how many days they came in, so there is a limitation of \$2,000, but we allow them \$50 a day compensation for their work connected with the responsibilities of the Commission. I move that LB 701 be advanced to E & R.

PRESIDENT: The Chair recognizes Senator Murphy.

SENATOR MURPHY: Senator Kremer, a question.

PRESIDENT: Senator Kremer, will you respond?

SENATOR MURPHY: What is our total...what was our total cost