

SENATOR STONEY: Mr. Speaker and members of the Legislature, the intent of LB 311 is rather simple. What it does is to request of the Legislature an adjustment in present statute which would allow for a salary adjustment for the Board of Directors for the Metropolitan Utilities District. The bill would increase the ceiling from its present \$200 to \$500 with a distinction being made for the chairman of that particular board increasing that ceiling amount from \$250 to \$600 a month. In addition it would allow for expenses for these individuals that they incur in conjunction with their duties and responsibilities on this particular board. I would like to restate again that it is permissive, that it would require the action of this duly elected board, the Metropolitan Utilities District, if at any time they decide they would like to propose a salary increase. I don't think that I need to mention to this body that salaries are a very important issue. We here in the Legislature have been unable since 1967 to receive a salary increase. I think that we should be sympathetic to those that are serving in other positions in these capacities wishing to provide them with salaries that are consistent with what their duties and responsibilities are. I think that there are a number of positive things that can happen by allowing this ceiling increase. I think that there is a possibility that we can perhaps attract more people to run for the board with a salary of \$200 a month, some for economic and monetary reasons would be totally excluded. I also think that the business of water and also natural gas, and I think that you here in the room would agree, are becoming more and more technical, comprehensive and complex and we need individuals to deal with these issues that have the expertise to address them accordingly. Another thing that this bill would accomplish is to establish some uniformity. Those of you who were here in 1979 know that the Public Power District directors were given a salary ceiling increase to a figure which is consistent with what is being requested here in LB 311. Now their annual gross income is 90 million dollars, I'm speaking now of the Public Power District, while the Metropolitan Utilities District has a gross revenue that exceeds ninety million dollars. Again, I want to state that it establishes a ceiling in statute and appropriate action would have to be taken by the board of directors if they propose an increase in their salaries. To give you some historical information the ceiling in 1953 for this board was \$100 for the directors and a distinction of \$50 additional for the chairmen. In 1967 it was adjusted, that was 14 years later, ladies and gentlemen, at which time that ceiling was established \$200 for directors and \$250 for the chairman of that board. Now,