

in the Legislature. It is a huge industry and yet I'm not ready to be convinced yet that technology can do all that we're being told that it can do. We may be approaching the point some day where that can happen, but I'm not ready to take that risk with my communities just yet. It is essential that we consider the source of some of these statistics that have been pointed out to us. It's my understanding that the studies that have been used to show us the safety of operating without cabooses have all been gathered primarily in Florida and on the East Coast. It is important also to clarify a point that Senator DeCamp made earlier about Nebraska being the only state with a caboose bill. That is, in fact, not true. Virginia, Oregon and New Mexico are some of the other states that retain a caboose bill in law. I think it's important to compare the place that these statistics were gathered with what I know and what you know about Nebraska and the kind of rail traffic that we have moving through the State of Nebraska right now. We have primarily a range country type of terrain with a lot of small towns that railroads run through. Senator Vickers I think has already adequately explained some of the risks to small communities if, in fact, we fail to adequately protect the safety of the citizens of those communities. Coming from an area that is primarily a ranching area, a livestock producing area, I will not bore you with long stories about problems that we've had in that realm, but I can tell you if you want to go out and talk to any rancher that has railroad lines passing through his property, it has often been less than a peaceful coexistence and I think it's important that industries in this state be able to coexist peacefully and that we don't sacrifice the interests of one industry, namely agriculture, for the interests of another equally important industry and that is the railroad. We also have in my district one of the steepest grades in the country. I've had the pleasure of riding in a Burlington Northern train up that grade. We run those long trains in my district. They are still, I would say, very much in an experimental state, but when a drawbar breaks on a train as they occasionally do on a grade, and that's pretty typical of any machinery, it's bound to happen. If you're going to move people off of that caboose on a two-mile train, if the break is toward the end of that train, I think you're going to have potentially a blocked crossing for a long, long time because the only way you have to get to the other end of that train is on foot. That has continually been a problem in small communities. I know that's been a problem here in