

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: That is correct, \$5 million.

SENATOR WESELY: So the state pays for the railroad, but under your amendment, you eliminating our interest in it?

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: The amendment creates a railway council, and there was...well, the amendment changes the function of the railway council. There was a railway council in the original bill, but in the original bill, it served as an advisory capacity to a division within the Department of Roads. We are really changing the function from an advisory capacity to making it into a quasi-body politic.

SENATOR WESELY: So now this council would actually run the railroad, is that right?

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: No, there is no intention to have the council run the railroad. It would own or hold the title to the railway. The proposal for this specific line, the Northern Line, is that it would hold title and lease the line to an operating corporation.

SENATOR WESELY: Who would that operating corporation be?

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: Well, that operating corporation could be composed of any number of groups. At the present time, we would suggest it be composed of a shipper, an operator, and some interest in that organization by the municipalities and counties along the line. The intention is to produce some community of interest, if you will, that would promote or enhance the chances for success of the line.

SENATOR WESELY: Who would actually operate the line and who would actually be employees of the line?

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: More than likely, there would be a separate contract with an operator, and there are a number of short line operators who have come forward and expressed an interest in the line, so I imagine that there would be a contract between this corporation that leased the line from the State of Nebraska and the operator.

SENATOR WESELY: Would the operator be another railroad, similar to say a Burlington Northern, or would C&NW operate it or who?