

February 19, 1992 LB 1008

PRESIDENT MOUL: One minute.

SENATOR MORRISSEY: So mandated recycling and other...other mandates in this state won't work, so we need to clearly identify the cost of the system, identify the hidden costs and move towards volume-based fees that will tell people exactly what they are doing, exactly what they are paying in their waste disposal and let them know exactly how reduction and recycling will benefit them by lowering their reduction of their garbage disposal bills. I support LB 1008.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Morrissey. Senator Hefner.

SENATOR HEFNER: Madam President and members of the Legislature, I believe I rise to support this bill but first I would like to have a couple of questions answered and I would address these to Senator Horgan or Senator Hartnett. My first question is how come the Legislature has to give Omaha or a city of the metropolitan size authority to do this while some of the...I know the town that I live in, Coleridge, well, they go ahead and charge a fee now. How come Omaha hasn't been allowed to do this:

SENATOR HORGAN: Senator, in statute there is special authority for all municipalities other than a city of the metropolitan class. So Omaha appears to be the only city that does not have this authority and it really, I think, goes back to the history that we have never charged our residents in Omaha a fee for the collection of garbage. Much of it was paid for out of federal revenue, local revenue grants. That money dried up in about '85-86 and then it just went into the General Fund. The city, several times in the past going back to even 1982, I think, has attempted to get this authority and they got an opinion from the Attorney General Bob Spire and he said you really need to go to the Legislature and get the authority because the statutes are unclear at best and probably prohibit it.

SENATOR HEFNER: Okay, thank you, Senator Horgan. One more question. In what year did we give the authority to the other cities and towns to levy this charge to pick up solid waste?

SENATOR HORGAN: Senator, I don't know that answer. I will have to do a little research.

SENATOR HEFNER: Okay, I think Senator Hartnett said he knew.