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General Affairs Committee
February 25, 2008

[LB955 LB993 LB1103]

The Committee on General Affairs met at 1:30 p.m. on Monday, February 25, 2008, in Room 1510 of the State Capitol, Lincoln, Nebraska, for the purpose of conducting a public hearing on LB993, LB1103, and LB955. Senators present: Vickie McDonald, Chairperson; Russ Karpisek, Vice Chairperson; Merton "Cap" Dierks; Annette Dubas; Philip Erdman; Mike Friend; Ray Janssen; and Don Preister. Senators absent: None. []

SENATOR McDONALD: Welcome. This is the General Affairs Committee. I'm Senator Vickie McDonald, Chairman of this committee. The committee members that are present, to my far right is: Senator Friend from Omaha, District 10; Senator Phil Erdman from Bayard, District 47; Senator "Cap" Dierks from Ewing, District 40; our Vice Chair Senator Russ Karpisek from Wilber, District 32; Laurie Lage is my committee counsel. To my far left is: Senator Preister from Omaha, District 5; Annette Dubas from Fullerton, District 34 will be here shortly; Senator Ray Janssen from Nickerson, District 15; Matt Rathje is our committee clerk. Our pages today are Molly Keenan from North Platte and Ashley McDonald from Rockville. The bills that we will be hearing today are LB993, LB1103, and LB955. After each bill is introduced, we would like to hear testimony in support of the bill, then we'll ask for opposition, and then we'll ask for neutral testimony. If you are planning to testify in any capacity, please pick up a sign-in sheet at the table at the back of either door. Please fill out the sign-in sheet before you testify. When it's your turn to testify, please hand in the testifying sheet to one of the pages. This will help them keep a correct accurate amount of the people that are testifying. Also make sure you have ten copies if you are passing information out to the committee. Please spell your name, speak clearly into the microphone. Turn off your cell phones or anything that makes noises. Keep your conversations to a minimum and we will have the first bill. []

SENATOR KARPISEK: Senator McDonald. [LB993]

SENATOR McDONALD: Yes, thank you, Senator Karpisek and General Affairs Committee. This is a very simple bill that I introduced in response to the annual letter that the Liquor Control Commission sends to the Governor and the Legislature stating their recommendations for statutory changes. The bill would allow the Nebraska Liquor Control Commission Rule and Regulation Cash Fund to be used for additional purposes. The fund receives money from two sources. First, the money in the fund comes from fees charged for the rules and regulations of the Liquor Control Act law books that are provided to anyone who requests such documents. Second, the fees collected for the cost of forms printed for the administration of the Keg Registration program are placed in the fund. A description of this cash fund is in your bill books. The Liquor Control Commission would like to utilize the fund for additional enforcement purposes, such as buying alcohol testers, creating training materials and helping to offset the cost of electronic regulatory transactions. The commission's executive director is here to explain this request in more detail, so I will just ask if you will have any

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questions for him. Thank you. [LB993]

SENATOR KARPISEK: Thank you, Senator McDonald. Any questions for Senator McDonald now? If not, we'll have proponents to the bill. [LB993]

HOBERT RUPE: Thank you, Senator Karpisek. Thank you again, Senator McDonald for introducing this bill. Members of the General Affairs Committee, my name is Hobert B. Rupe, that's H-o-b-e-r-t B. last name Rupe R-u-p-e. I'm the executive director of the Nebraska Liquor Control Commission. This fund has been around for quite a while, and what it does is it traditionally has been able to defray the cost of law books and about every two or three years, depending upon how many legislative changes are made, we publish those law books. That usually costs about \$35,000 to \$36,000 generally, depending on costs. That's traditionally how it's been. The other way this fund's money was used in the past was for part of a quarterly newsletter. When Wagon Wheel ceased doing that kind of work, I reviewed the purpose of whether the quarterly newsletter was really necessary because a lot of that information is now being available on our Web site. So we're seeing savings from that way because we're not spending that money there. But a couple of other issues have come up where this fund probably be used to help defray enforcement costs and training costs. As Senator McDonald said, one of the issues that we're seeing more of, we're seeing a rise in allegations of an illegal practice called "refilling." Because of the three-tiered system, the United States doesn't have as much of a problem with counterfeiting for health and welfare issue we have. But we do have sort of a consumer fraud problem where you'll say take a higher end Canadian whiskey like--I'll just use as an example--Crown Royal and the bar will refill it with a lower grade quality. And then they're selling it and basically perpetuating fraud. You're paying for the higher quality and you're not getting it. Recently technology has advanced to the stage where now you can get, for relatively...I think about \$5,000, you can get a tester which you can then run those tests and you get a pass/fail on whether there is problem if you've got a bar refilling. And we thought it was appropriate for the commission to buy this because then we could send it out to either the patrol or the local law enforcement officers. They say, hey, we've got a complaint out here, can we utilize this tester? Can you guys program it in with this thing? Can we see whether this fraud is taking place? So that's one area where we thought we'd like to spend the money. One of the other areas where we would like to be able to use this money is we're seeing more and more complaints come in to the commission that are generated not by the patrol which serves our primary investigator, but by local police department, local sheriff's department who may not have the expertise with the Liquor Control Act that an investigator with the patrol does who deals with it on a daily basis. So we've been working with the patrol and we're planning on doing a law enforcement training seminar out at the academy in Grand Island, and so we could use some of this money to defer some of the cost for materials and that kind of stuff associated with doing that. And we're also getting more request for perhaps doing more training for the industry. So depending on how our budget works...different times it's perhaps, especially once

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there's major law changes, is doing some seminars to allow licensees to attend to their understanding of the law. What we're trying to do is, you know, this fund sitting there because of their decision earlier to utilize their Web site instead of the quarterly newsletter, we're seeing some savings basically, the fund that wasn't anticipated. And we think we could utilize that fund for educational and enforcement issues if we had a little more authority to spend that fund, other than just pure publications of the rule book and of the law signs. So given that, I would answer any questions. [LB993]

SENATOR McDONALD: Any questions for Mr. Rupe? So at this point in time, the money is just sitting there? [LB993]

HOBERT RUPE: Yeah. We have about \$87,000 in the fund currently. There's some ideas which we've already budgeted. Probably next year we'll be looking to do another reprinting of the law book which would be about \$35,000 to \$37,000, and we're also under the Training Certification Act, we are helping defray some keeping NU Directions on-line thing funded through that. So what we're probably going to end up really spending is probably close to \$20,000-\$25,000 which we don't see as already being budgeted or needed for those core funds which we could utilize to help promote health, safety, and welfare. [LB993]

SENATOR McDONALD: How much is generated in that fund each year on average? [LB993]

HOBERT RUPE: I think on an average it's about \$20,000-\$25,000 comes in. Most of the cost that go out all the time through it are reprintings of the signs, you know, the warning signs for minors, the pregnancy signs, the Keg Registration Act, and the minors identification book. So those funds are sort of cost in there. But what we're seeing is we're sort of seeing basically the same money we're saving off the discontinuation off the quarterly newsletter being there still built into that fund and we think we could utilize it for other health issues. [LB993]

SENATOR McDONALD: Senator Dierks. [LB993]

SENATOR DIERKS: Hobie, the places that you might use your funding, would some of that be to some of the county officials in the state? Is that... [LB993]

HOBERT RUPE: The one we're looking at primarily is going through it first would be the law enforcement training academy, and then we would be going through with the sheriff's association to try to get a lot of sheriffs departments there so that they're able to understand it. We traditionally have always gone out to the League of Municipalities. I generally do a presentation out there every year to county officials. So we already started doing that, but this was one where we're sort of going to invite people in for a day long, basically here's what you do if you're going to be doing a premise inspection.

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Here's how you should do a minor compliance check and that sort of thing. Sort of, you know, education. You know, we've found that the people who do it a lot know how to do it and if you don't do it all the time, you might not be up on the proper ways, what you're looking for, how to do it and that's what we're going to try to do it first. But beyond that, I know that a lot of people from the farm wineries have approached us perhaps about doing, in conjunction with TTB, sort of a beginning... "so you've decided to open up a winery" seminar. And so that would be one if there's enough funds here in following years we would probably anticipate using that too. [LB993]

SENATOR DIERKS: Thank you. [LB993]

SENATOR McDONALD: Any other questions for Mr. Rupe? The training that comes in for servers that serve alcohol, who pays for that training? Is it the employer or does the Liquor Control Commission have some part in that? [LB993]

HOBERT RUPE: Generally the employer pays for it, for taking the training. What the fund is doing currently is under that act, the commission was able to sort of adopt one of their own. The commission decided to adopt the on-line server training through the university because that was the one that's most available statewide and that was one of the primary things. The other issue behind was we were instrumental when they first began that by getting them a grant to start that funding. Because of their lack of funding through some of the other grants, there was a problem obtaining...on keeping modules up to date, you know the law, of doing updates. And so part of that fund that we have exists to make sure that they're up to date and keep that timely. So we are accepting part of it. Right now we're only charging from the commission standpoint, \$5 and that's primarily to maintain the database. Under the server training bill which was passed as part of LB845, it requires us to maintain a list, and so that's what we're doing right now. We're keeping a minimal cost at \$5, that's to maintain the database, to pay for the certifications, certificates, and that sort of stuff. So we're not making a lot of money right now. There are some mechanisms in there that if we need to spend some more money on that's available. But right now it's more of a maintenance issue. [LB993]

SENATOR McDONALD: Okay. Thank you. Any other questions? I'm seeing none, thank you. [LB993]

HOBERT RUPE: Thank you. [LB993]

SENATOR McDONALD: We're looking for supportive testimony for LB993. [LB993]

KATHY SIEFKEN: Senator McDonald and members of the committee, my name is Kathy Siefken, S-i-e-f-k-e-n, representing the Nebraska Grocery Industry Association here in support of this bill. Any time you can provide additional training to licensees, we appreciate it. We were one of the groups that stepped forward and said we will gladly

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pay another \$5 to help get that NU Directions Web-Based Server-Seller Training Program up-to-date and keeping it up-to-date. It still needs work. The off-sale module is not...it just doesn't hit quite where it needs to hit, and we're hoping that when you make funds available to the Liquor Control Commission that that will be one of the things that they will focus on. So with that, if you have any questions I'd be happy to try to answer them. [LB993]

SENATOR McDONALD: Any questions for Ms. Siefken? Seeing none, thank you for your testimony. [LB993]

KATHY SIEFKEN: Thank you. [LB993]

SENATOR McDONALD: Anyone else in support of LB993? Seeing none, anyone in opposition? Seeing none, anyone in a neutral testimony? [LB993]

DIANE RIIBE: Hi, Senator McDonald, members of the committee. I'm Diane Riibe with Project Extra Mile, and I don't know that we're in a position to speak on the entire proposal. But wanted to at least acknowledge the importance of the dollars that would be directed to enforcement training, particularly when it comes to the liquor licensing laws. There's a real void, as Mr. Rupe said. There are increasing numbers of agencies doing those enforcement operations, becoming more aware of what's needed and yet the training is just really not institutionalized within the training academy which is hopefully a long-term goal. I did talk with Mr. Rupe just a bit earlier and another hope and desire we would have, just for the record, is that that be coordinated. We've been working for several years providing that kind of training to law enforcement agencies across the state in cooperation with the Nebraska Office of Highway Safety as well as the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Preventions. So that has been ongoing, although there is a desperate need for more. So it's important and it certainly is an appropriate use of those dollars and we would appreciate it. [LB993]

SENATOR McDONALD: Thank you, Ms. Riibe. Any questions? Seeing none, thank you for your testimony. Anyone else in a neutral capacity? Seeing none, that will close the hearing on LB993. Our next bill is LB1103 by Senator Karpisek. [LB993]

SENATOR KARPISEK: Thank you, Senator McDonald, members of the General Affairs Committee. My name is Russ Karpisek, R-u-s-s K-a-r-p-i-s-e-k, and I represent the 32nd Legislative District. I'm introducing LB1103 today which was brought to me by the Nebraska Wine and Grape Growers Association. The association's members want the clarification for consistency in the application of the 75-25 percent rule. If a farm winery owner is granted a waiver due to natural disaster which causes a substantial loss of the Nebraska grown crop, any product purchased as concentrate or concentrated juice from outside of Nebraska when reconstituted may not exceed in total volume, along with any other product purchased by the total percentage allowed by the waiver. This

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reconstitution rule also applies to the 25 percent rule. So what we're saying on that is that if the grapes are all froze out and they get a waiver, they can only get as much...(inaudible) I'm sorry, as much concentrated juice... [LB1103]

SENATOR ERDMAN: You better spell that for the record. [LB1103]

SENATOR KARPISEK: I should (laugh). I can't even say it, how would I spell it? They could only get enough concentrated juice that when it is reconstituted to equal the grapes that they lost. And I think that this is some self-enforcing on this to make it a little bit more understood by the association. The bill would also allow for wineries to sell their wines to other Nebraska farm wineries in bulk, bottled, labeled or unlabeled bottles, and it would also allow farm wineries to purchase distilled spirits from a licensed microdistillery in Nebraska, in bulk or bottle, to add to their Nebraska wine to make fortified wine, such as port. And as you recall, last year we passed the microdistillery license. So this would allow the farm winery to buy the distilled liquor to add to their Nebraska-made wine to make fortified wine. And that is the nature of the bill. With that, I would take any questions. [LB1103]

SENATOR McDONALD: Any questions for Senator Karpisek? Senator Dubas. [LB1103]

SENATOR DUBAS: Thank you, Senator McDonald. Thank you, Senator Karpisek. So the only waiver, or the only thing that they could apply for with waiver is if they had a loss of their crop? [LB1103]

SENATOR KARPISEK: Right, and as far as I know, the loss of the crop or if there just isn't enough grapes within the state to make up for that 75 percent rule. [LB1103]

SENATOR DUBAS: Okay. So if the loss was an isolated loss, whatever, but they could make up the difference from some other grape grower in the state, they could do that. But if they weren't able to... [LB1103]

SENATOR KARPISEK: That's how I understand it, Senator. I think Hobie may be able to shed a little more light on that for us. [LB1103]

SENATOR DUBAS: Okay. All right. Thank you. [LB1103]

SENATOR KARPISEK: Thank you. [LB1103]

SENATOR McDONALD: Who determines if it's a disaster? Is certain percentage of the wine that's gone, you know, is it bugs or is weather or maybe I'll just wait and ask someone else. [LB1103]

SENATOR KARPISEK: We'll let Hobert say that one too. [LB1103]

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SENATOR McDONALD: Okay. All right. Senator Janssen. [LB1103]

SENATOR JANSSEN: Hobie.... [LB1103]

SENATOR KARPISEK: No, (laughter) not yet. [LB1103]

SENATOR DUBAS: No, that's Russ. [LB1103]

SENATOR JANSSEN: Fred. (Laughter) Now you couldn't bring concentrate in from out of state or you could? [LB1103]

SENATOR KARPISEK: You could with the loss. [LB1103]

SENATOR JANSSEN: All right. [LB1103]

SENATOR KARPISEK: Only if there's a loss. [LB1103]

SENATOR JANSSEN: Would you still have to use a certain percentage of juice that is grown in the state enabling it to be called Nebraska wine? [LB1103]

SENATOR KARPISEK: But we do have the wavier provision that you could bring it in to call it Nebraska wine if there was that loss. [LB1103]

SENATOR JANSSEN: Okay. All right. [LB1103]

SENATOR KARPISEK: And again, I'm sure Hobie will be able to shed more light on that for us. [LB1103]

SENATOR JANSSEN: Well, you said Hobie so much that's why I started calling you... [LB1103]

SENATOR KARPISEK: I know. But if I had a goatee and lost a few pounds I might look like him (laugh). [LB1103]

SENATOR JANSSEN: I'm not too sure about that (laugh). [LB1103]

SENATOR McDONALD: Senator Dierks. [LB1103]

SENATOR DIERKS: I didn't catch your answer for sure, that's on where the grapes could come from. [LB1103]

SENATOR KARPISEK: They could come from anywhere on the loss, but they would

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have to be equivalent to what we make...what we can grow here. [LB1103]

SENATOR DIERKS: With the problems we've had with importing of Canada, wouldn't it be wise to keep them from bringing their grapes in here? [LB1103]

SENATOR KARPISEK: It may and I'm not sure on what kind of grapes they grow. They'd have to be equivalent to ours. So you wouldn't be able to bring in everything to make merlot because we can't grow those grapes here. [LB1103]

SENATOR DIERKS: Thank you. [LB1103]

SENATOR KARPISEK: Thank you. [LB1103]

SENATOR McDONALD: Seeing no more questions, then thank you, Senator Karpisek. We are looking for testimony in support of LB1103. [LB1103]

HOBERT RUPE: Thank you once again. My name is Hobert Rupe, R-u-p-e, executive director. I know was talking as a proponent twice, I might set some sort of record. I was going to let the grape and wine industry go first, but I think a lot of the questions...I guess, first of all, I'll sort of give you an idea of how the concentrate issue came before us recently. As you're aware under the Nebraska Farm Winery Act, a Nebraska wine, if 75 percent of the (inaudible)...I now have that same disease. If it is made of 75 percent of Nebraska agricultural product...they can already import up to 25 percent. Why is that important? Well, the main importance of that is to be a Nebraska farm winery, you have to produce Nebraska farm wines and they get a 6 cents a gallon tax versus a 90 cents a gallon tax. All right. There is a waiver provision that already existed that in case of natural disaster or emergency, they can apply to the commission for a waiver of that 75-25 ruling. We had never had an application until about three years ago, four years ago. And when that first application came to us, I went to the Nebraska Grape and Winery Board, which as it's set up can serve as an advisory committee to the liquor control committee, and said, okay, you guys are the grape growing experts, what's a natural disaster in the viticultural industry? And they gave us a definition of that clause and it worked out very well. The first case went through was no problem. We got a second application because that was the year there was a very hard early freeze. There was a freeze that happened after what's commonly called "bud break", so you had a lot of the primary grapes on the vines die. They sprouted and then they died and so they didn't turn into grapes. On that second licensee, who I will allow to remain nameless because their attorney happens to be here, they came in and they showed that they had an 18 ton loss of grapes from...and they were able to show that because of their contracts from their producers who had produced in previous years. So the commission says, okay, you can bring in 18 tons worth of grapes. In our mind, that's 18 tons of grapes or the equivalent in juice or the equivalent concentrate. They chose to read that as 18 tons of concentrate, which depending on the type of grapes is either 3-1 or 4-1,

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boom. I mean, one gallon of concentrate will make four gallons or three gallons of wine, depending on it. Luckily we caught them before they got over the amount of the waiver in the first place, roughly the 18 tons or the equivalent. So this bill is sort of designed to clarify that if you are getting the waiver, the purpose of the waiver is to allow you to outsource or seek other sources other than Nebraska in other grape states to sort of cover you loss. It doesn't exist to increase your production. The commission has been adamant that the waiver...all it's going to do is allow you to cover your loss with out-of-state grapes because of a natural disaster, either a flood or a freeze. We had one which came in and it was because it was hail storms. A hail storm hit a place and damaged it, so they got a waiver. So that's sort of what the purpose of the 75-25 waiver is and what the view of the concentrate...and why the issue of concentrate came up beforehand. So is there any other questions on that? [LB1103]

SENATOR McDONALD: Any questions? I have a couple. We passed that bill last year for the microdistilleries. Do you know, do we have any that are up and running and maybe some that are coming on board? [LB1103]

HOBERT RUPE: We have one who is licensed, in operation and if I remember correctly, we have two there in the process of being licensed, at least they have inquired about getting a license. [LB1103]

SENATOR McDONALD: Okay. [LB1103]

HOBERT RUPE: So we were approached about that because a lot of the farm wineries wanted to make port, which requires a distillate. And since there is a microdistillery, we thought that was a very...you know, the way that Senator Karpisek has it set up is the proper way to do it. A lot of those microdistilleries are planning on doing higher-end whiskeys and scotches. Well, those take five years to develop, so right now they're just doing, you know, vodkas and some of the clear distills. This will allow them to keep...it's basically beneficial to both sides. It will allow them to get their distillation processes up and operating and it will also allow the farm wineries to satisfy a need. There's been a lot of requests, as my understanding is, for ports primarily, which require the addition of a distillate to the regular wine. [LB1103]

SENATOR McDONALD: Would this also allow them to make sangria? Is that made with wine and a liquor? I'm not sure I know what sangria is, but I've been reading up on a few things. [LB1103]

HOBERT RUPE: You know, I'm not sure (inaudible) sangria, and at the risk of being wrong, I'll defer to the wine experts behind me. [LB1103]

SENATOR McDONALD: Okay. All right. Any other questions for Hobie? Senator Dierks. [LB1103]

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SENATOR DIERKS: Hobie, I just wanted to go back to the question that I asked of Senator Karpisek. With the knowledge we have of the import of fruit and vegetables and food from China, and the problems that they bring us, wouldn't it be wise for us to make sure we didn't get those problems in the form of dried grapes? [LB1103]

HOBERT RUPE: Well, you wouldn't be getting it in the form of dried grapes. The concentrate... [LB1103]

SENATOR DIERKS: Concentrates, whatever. [LB1103]

HOBERT RUPE: Yeah, if you've ever made an orange, you know, a gallon of orange juice out of the can, that's basically what the process is. I don't think there is much importation from China on grapes. Most of your...the times where there has been an application for the 75-25, if I remember correctly, I think they were able to supplement by...they were able to go buy some grapes from New York and Washington primarily. California didn't even have any grapes to sell. I think the reason why you're looking at probably just the United States issue is until it's turned into wine, these things can...I mean, grapes rot quickly. That's why they turn it into juice. Juice you can hold it longer, and concentrate you can hold it even longer than as a juice. But without the additions of preservatives and stuff, these agricultural products just don't have a long life span. And so generally what will happen...and I'm pretty sure that the members from the wine industry can say this, if you need more grapes, you're trying to call everybody right around harvest time to see if they have extras. So I don't really see there being a big issue of buying it overseas. But perhaps...you know, but that's just my understanding. All the times I've seen it it's been U.S. domestic grapes have been imported. [LB1103]

SENATOR DIERKS: Thank you. [LB1103]

SENATOR McDONALD: Do most people that raise grapes, do they contract their grapes with a producer and are there extra grapes? I mean, depending on a good year, but are there those that don't contract prior to... [LB1103]

HOBERT RUPE: Most of them have contracts and that was how, in the case, we were able to show how much the loss because these vineyards, which have been in production for years, were able to bring in their annual production over five years and they were able to show the 50 percent decrease in their production that year because of the frost. There are many, many, many, by probably a factor of probably almost ten, more vineyards than there are wineries. Most wineries grow grapes as well, but I believe most of...you know, all of them also contract with pure vineyards. And there's probably over...last I heard, there was I think over 120 vineyards and only about 20 farm wineries and there might be more vineyards than that. I mean, I'm just...we don't really regulate as much on the growing side, just when they're starting to ferment it. [LB1103]

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SENATOR McDONALD: Thank you. Any other questions for Hobie? Seeing none, thank you. [LB1103]

HOBERT RUPE: Thank you. [LB1103]

SENATOR McDONALD: Looking for support of LB1103. [LB1103]

MICK McDOWELL: (Exhibit 1) Madame Chairman, members of the committee, my name is Mick McDowell, M-i-c-k M-c-D-o-w-e-l-l. I own a small winery at St. Paul, Nebraska. It's called Miletta Vista Winery and I'm also president of the Nebraska Wine and Grape Growers Association for this coming year. We are in support of Senator Karpisek's bill, LB1103, which does bring clarification to the Nebraska Farm Winery Act. And it does allow us to purchase distilled spirits for the purpose of making port wines, which is something that a lot of our customers have been asking for over the last ten years of the life of our industry. To answer a little bit maybe of what Hobie had had in some of his questions, we do have approximately 125 to 150 members in the Nebraska Wine and Grape Growers Association. That is a combination of both growers and wineries. Now that is not all inclusive of the industry of growing grapes. Not every person who does grow grapes is a member of our Nebraska Wine and Grape Growers Association. But we do have, at last count, approximately 23 wineries in the state of Nebraska. So we have a pretty good ratio. With that, we do again, offer our support to this bill and at this time I would entertain any questions. [LB1103]

SENATOR McDONALD: Any questions for Mr. McDowell? Seeing none, thank you for your testimony. [LB1103]

MICK McDOWELL: Thank you. [LB1103]

SENATOR McDONALD: Support for LB1103? Anyone in opposition? Seeing none, anyone testifying in a neutral capacity? Seeing none, Senator Karpisek closes. That will end the hearing on LB1103. Our next bill is LB955 by Senator Dierks. Welcome. [LB1103]

SENATOR DIERKS: Thank you. Chairman McDonald, members of the General Affairs Committee, my name is Senator "Cap" Dierks, spelled C-a-p D-i-e-r-k-s, and I represent District 40. It is a pleasure to be here today on this side of the table as this is the first time in 18 years as a legislator that I have introduced a bill before the General Affairs Committee. I come before the committee today to ask that the committee take no action on LB955, but leave the bill in committee. A decision in the federal lawsuit has been handed down concerning the issues in this bill. Agreements between Southern Wine and Spirits and the state of Nebraska through the Attorney General's Office have been reached but are not finalized in writing. I ask that LB955 be held in committee at this

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time. Thank you very much. [LB955]

SENATOR McDONALD: Thank you, Senator Dierks. Have any questions? Seeing none, thank you for your testimony. Looking for anyone speaking in support of LB955. Seeing none, anyone in opposition? Seeing none, anyone in a neutral capacity? Seeing none, Senator Dierks, would you like to close? He waives closing. That will end our hearing on LB955 and end the hearings for today. Thank you. [LB955]

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Disposition of Bills:

LB993 - Advanced to General File.
LB1103 - Advanced to General File.
LB955 - Indefinitely postponed.

Chairperson

Committee Clerk