

Transcript Prepared By the Clerk of the Legislature
Transcriber's Office

Natural Resources Committee
March 23, 2011

[CONFIRMATION]

The Committee on Natural Resources met at 1:30 p.m. on Wednesday, March 23, 2011, in Room 1525 of the State Capitol, Lincoln, Nebraska, for the purpose of conducting a public hearing on the confirmation of Stan Clouse. Senators present: Chris Langemeier, Chairperson; Tom Carlson; Annette Dubas; Beau McCoy; and Jim Smith. Senators absent: Mark Christensen; Ken Haar; and Ken Schilz, Vice Chairperson.
[CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LANGEMEIER: Good afternoon and welcome to the Natural Resources Committee today for a confirmation hearing. I'd like to introduce our senators that we have with us. Let's start on this side, we have Senator Beau McCoy will be with us in a moment from Elkhorn. We have Senator Tom Carlson from Holdrege; Senator Annette Dubas from Fullerton. And then we're kind of void a few, but they'll join us soon. And then we have Senator Smith from Papillion on the end. And so we have Laurie Lage is our legal counsel and Barb Koehlmoos is our committee clerk who you have already had a number of conversations with to get you here today. And so with that we'll open the confirmation hearing for Stan Clouse who is being appointed to the Natural Resources Commission for your first term. [CONFIRMATION]

STAN CLOUSE: First term. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LANGEMEIER: First term. Well welcome. [CONFIRMATION]

STAN CLOUSE: (Exhibit 1) Well thank you. This is...I've testified before some other committee wearing my mayor's hat primarily on roads and things of that nature. I'm trying to get an interchange in Kearney and some different things. So it is an honor to be here to talk with you. I've met many of you on different occasions. But I received a call from the Governor's Office asking if I'd be interested in serving on this commission. So I checked it out and did some research on it; thought this would be something that I think would fit primarily from the Governor's appointment from the municipal side. I've been...I'm not going to go over everything, because I don't like just reading...everybody can read. But I grew up in Brady, Nebraska, small village about 75 yards from the Platte River. So I grew up along the river. My dad worked for Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation for a number of years. And I was growing up, and then as my adult I started working for Nebraska Public Power; been with NPPD for over 32 years, going on 33 years, out at Gentleman Station, the coal plant in Sutherland. I've been through every hydro plant along the Platte River, coal plants. And so the experience that I have on that side, very environmentally conscious with the things that we have going on with NPPD. I felt that was a fit, just understanding the natural resources things that we're talking about in the state with wind energy, with biomass, those types of things. So it's more than just the water that we deal with; we have a lot of other issues. From the city perspective, my background is I served on the planning commission in the city of North

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Platte, Shelton Village Board, and then Kearney served on the Board of Adjustments and I've been on the council since 2003, eight years on the city council. Then I replaced Galen Hadley as mayor. And so I've been mayor for five years. And all those times, whether it's the village board or the planning commission or the city of Kearney, very conscientious of where we are at with our water consumption, where we are at with our wellfields, contaminants. For example, in the city of Kearney, I don't think you'll ever see us recruiting a truck stop in that area, on the south side of the Interstate, primarily, because we feel that the wellfield...we have two wellfields actually, but the wellfield in the Platte River is too important for us. It's not worth sacrificing any type of environmental spill if you have a truck stop that close to where our wellfield is, so you'll never see anything like that in Kearney. We have a northwest wellfield that we just put in a few years ago, so we have significant amount of water capacity. And on the city side, the municipal side, we're always talking about waste water treatment, what do we do with stormwater runoff, all those types of environmental things. So when I was asked to take a look at this, I thought, you know, there might be a good fit just based on the background and the things that are of interest to me. So that is why I'm here and just...I'll answer any questions you may have. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LANGEMEIER: Very good. Are there any questions? Senator Dubas. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR DUBAS: Thank you, Senator Langemeier. Thank you, Mayor Clouse, for being here today. What do you see as the main purpose or function of the commission and then how do you see yourself fitting into that purpose? [CONFIRMATION]

STAN CLOUSE: Well I think the main purpose of the commission, as is with many of them, is just to provide some oversight and provide feedback, you know, with the NRDs, if there are things they are wanting to do; make sure we don't get headed too far off in one direction, but maybe bring a sense of balance, say, well, here are some other issues, have you thought about this? That's just high level. And I've talked to Clint Johannes who is on the commission and I told Clint, I said, you know, I've got an awful lot to learn and I said, but, you know, I've worked with Clint a long time and he said, yeah, he said, you'll fit in fine. He says there will be a learning curve. But typically that's, as I've seen it, through various roles and commissions is, you know, make sure we have some balance and we don't go off on some tangent that could be detrimental in one way or the other. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR DUBAS: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

STAN CLOUSE: Um-hum. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LANGEMEIER: Senator Carlson. [CONFIRMATION]

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SENATOR CARLSON: Thank you, Senator Langemeier. Stan, do you think the biggest challenge for you is going to be serving on the Natural Resource Commission or was it fixing all that Hadley screwed up when he was mayor? [CONFIRMATION]

STAN CLOUSE: He takes credit for all the good stuff, doesn't he. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CARLSON: You said you were contacted, so you don't apply? You don't show... [CONFIRMATION]

STAN CLOUSE: You apply, you apply, yeah. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CARLSON: You apply. [CONFIRMATION]

STAN CLOUSE: Yeah, and I talked to Lynn Rex at the League and I think they all said, you know, when they called who would maybe be a good fit for a municipal representative on this? And so, I never really thought about it. That's just one..then after I got to looking at it, yeah, this would be a good fit, so it was interesting to me. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CARLSON: So, yeah, somebody recommended you and then you did make application. [CONFIRMATION]

STAN CLOUSE: Yeah. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CARLSON: Which is a pretty good process, really. [CONFIRMATION]

STAN CLOUSE: Yeah, um-hum...yep. Yeah, so there's no ulterior motives, there's no...I don't have any...I'm going in with a fresh mind, clean slate, what do we look at. But certainly wearing my NPPD hat, we have a lot of things with natural resources that we deal with every day. We just had a meeting the other day talking about our vegetation management on our power lines and what the impact of that's going to be when we start talking about what we're going to be doing with some shelterbelts and some things like that. So there's that balance, you know, and how do you manage that with our citizens and with our customers and arrive at some solutions that everybody can live with. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CARLSON: You've got...you're on a lot of boards. I used to be that way. [CONFIRMATION]

STAN CLOUSE: Yeah. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CARLSON: How do you manage it all? [CONFIRMATION]

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STAN CLOUSE: A lot of it wearing my NPPD hat and my mayor's hat, a lot of it is interchangeable. I have a lot of situations that...I'm talking with the same customer and they might ask me a question on NPPD and then five minutes later it might be, well what's the city doing with this? And so a lot of it...it looks pretty busy, and quite frankly it is, but I'm a single guy and I don't have any kids and so I tell our council, I said you know, your time will come; I've got the time I can spend to do it. I said, take care of your family and then there will be a time when I'll step down and you move into some of these slots. So I enjoy keeping busy; I enjoy participating in things across the state. Like I said, born and raised in the state of Nebraska and I just love everything about our state. And these various commissions and boards give me opportunity to really develop a greater understanding of it and really appreciate what we have in our state. And I don't think a lot of people really grasp that opportunity and take advantage of it.

[CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CARLSON: I want to ask you one other question. And I don't even necessarily want an answer. This is probably not the place for it. But we're going to have...I think we're going to open debate this afternoon on an issue that is really important in Nebraska. Are you familiar with the Humane Society of the United States?

[CONFIRMATION]

STAN CLOUSE: I'm familiar with what they're attempting to do. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CARLSON: And you don't like it. [CONFIRMATION]

STAN CLOUSE: No. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CARLSON: Good. Okay. You have any questions about that, you get...
[CONFIRMATION]

STAN CLOUSE: About what... [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CARLSON: ...about them in any way, or you hear something, get in touch with us. [CONFIRMATION]

STAN CLOUSE: My position on the city council and as mayor is typically when we have issues like that, I'll take a position and then defend it. I'll listen, but my position has always been in any type of decisions that are made is, I'll make a...I'll think it through, make a decision, then I'll let my constituents know why I made the decision I did. And that I'm still open to change or to their input, but I don't like waffling, especially some of these that are fairly controversial. You got to take a stand so people know where you're at so we can respond accordingly. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CARLSON: Now you have a...it's either a rescue facility or is it called a

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humane facility. [CONFIRMATION]

STAN CLOUSE: They changed...it's animal shelter, they dropped it. Yeah, they went away from that. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CARLSON: That's good, that's good. And those local groups are fine. [CONFIRMATION]

STAN CLOUSE: Yeah. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CARLSON: They do good work. It's just too bad that many of them in name get mixed up with the other organization. [CONFIRMATION]

STAN CLOUSE: And I've been to the Governor's Ag Conference; I've been to some of the same conferences that I've seen you at and, you know, and we talk about what this agency is trying to do. And it's not in the best interest of our state; I don't believe that at all. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CARLSON: Thank you. You got my vote. [CONFIRMATION]

STAN CLOUSE: Okay. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LANGEMEIER: Senator Smith. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR SMITH: Thank you, Senator. Mayor Clouse, thank you so much for your willingness to serve and to take on this responsibility. I like what I see with your public power background. I know that that's good training ground for being responsive to the public and being...finding good, workable solutions for our state. I like what I see in your civic-minded support of the communities. Of course, we have a common background with Make-A-Wish Foundation and a lot of these other boards you've served on it shows that you really have a heart for the communities. And again, thank you for stepping forward and taking this on. [CONFIRMATION]

STAN CLOUSE: Well thank you, appreciate that. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LANGEMEIER: Are there any other questions? Seeing none, thank you very much, well done. You did good. [CONFIRMATION]

STAN CLOUSE: Okay. Thank you. Have a nice day and now you can go back to work. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CARLSON: Thank you, Stan. [CONFIRMATION]

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SENATOR McCOY: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LANGEMEIER: You've heard the opening on the confirmation hearing report; the Natural Resources appointment of Stan Clouse to the Natural Resource Commission. Is there anyone that would like to testify in support? Is there anyone that would like to testify in opposition? Is there anyone that would like to testify in a neutral capacity? Seeing none, that concludes the hearing for today and thank you very much for coming in. [CONFIRMATION]

STAN CLOUSE: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]