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Transcriber's Office

Natural Resources Committee  
April 07, 2011

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[CONFIRMATION]

The Committee on Natural Resources met at 12:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 7, 2011, in Room 1525 of the State Capitol, Lincoln, Nebraska, for the purpose of conducting a public hearing for confirmations of James Stuart, Jr.; Paul Dunn; and Gloria Erickson. Senators present: Chris Langemeier, Chairperson; Tom Carlson; Mark Christensen; Annette Dubas; and Jim Smith. Senators absent: Ken Haar; Beau McCoy; and Ken Schilz, Vice Chairperson. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LANGEMEIER: (Recorder Malfunction)...we have currently with us myself, as well as Senator Jim Smith from Papillion. And the other committee members may or may not get here by the time we get to yours. [CONFIRMATION]

JIM STUART: Good. Hello, Jim, how are you doing? [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR SMITH: Hello, Mr. Stuart, good to see you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LANGEMEIER: So we will get this started. And first of all you've been reappointed by the Governor to serve on the Nebraska Environmental Trust Board. And this... [CONFIRMATION]

JIM STUART: (Exhibit 1) That's correct and I'm very pleased. I've really enjoyed my service on this board. I'm really impressed with the good work that the board does for the state of Nebraska. I'm happy to serve again, if the committee votes me in. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LANGEMEIER: Sure. Do you want to tell us a little bit about your experience there and what you've enjoyed or maybe not enjoyed and what you hope to do on your next term. [CONFIRMATION]

JIM STUART: I will. As I think most of you know, I've got a long history in the state of Nebraska. I was the chairman and chief executive officer of First Commerce Bancshares which was purchased by Wells Fargo about ten years ago. And then I've...during that period of time, of course, I was quite involved in a lot of the cities around the state of Nebraska and got to know a lot of the issues, problems, strengths, weaknesses of the state. And then in this past year I've continued my service on the Environmental Trust Board, as well as being on the Game and Parks Commission and some national boards where I felt like I could use some of my experience and expertise to kind of further the cause of good things happening for the state of Nebraska. And the...one of the great things that I think that has been happening on the Environmental Trust Board is the honesty of the board itself and the quality of the staff. We work very hard to do really good things with the money that has been allocated to us and we take our business very seriously in terms of reviewing each one of these requests for

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funding. In the time that we spend, and this includes the members of the board as well, in the time that we spend looking at the validity and looking at the positive impacts of these various requests that we get for funds is really quite impressive. I'm not sure I've seen anything run quite so well in my lifetime. So I've been very impressed. I continue to try to be well-balanced in terms of things that I tend to want to support. Although I'm a hunter and fisherman at heart, I understand that there are a lot of people out there that maybe aren't, so I like to, from time to time, go back and read our charge and read our charter and then do my job appropriately. So that means a reasonable amount of attention to the different areas of interest, vis-a-vis, the state's environmental interests. And so I don't think I sway one way or another on particular interests; I just try to be as balanced as I can. I might go on, however, to say that I am supportive of this Snake River Falls issue that is coming down fairly closely here on the board. I think I understand some of those that are opposed to this issue, but I tend to think, just like Yellowstone Park and some of the other great national parks that we have in this country, that in the state of Nebraska I think, from time to time, we find opportunities to find real gems that we should be restoring and keeping for our children, our grandchildren, and their grandchildren. And I think the Snake River Falls issue happens to fall in that category. At the same time, I'm a rancher out in the western part of the state of Nebraska and I understand some of the landowner issues and some of their concerns about sometimes too much government or too much land being taken out of production and some of the competitive issues on that front. That being said, I continue to go back to reading the job description of those of us that are on the board that says, you know, our job isn't to create new legislation, it's to do the best we can for the environment of the state of Nebraska and that's what I try to do. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LANGEMEIER: Very good. Senator Smith, do you have any questions?  
[CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR SMITH: Yes. Mr. Stuart, I noticed on your statement of financial interest that you're a committee member with Ducks Unlimited. [CONFIRMATION]

JIM STUART: That's correct. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR SMITH: Can you explain a little bit about what that role is and how long you've been on that committee? [CONFIRMATION]

JIM STUART: Yes. I'm on the, what they call the conservation committee of Ducks Unlimited, which is one of the three top national committees. The involvement of that group is setting goals and objectives of Ducks Unlimited across America to allocate monies into different flyways. We generally don't get site specific until the projects have already been approved. We do have to approve each particular project if Ducks Unlimited ever comes into ownership of a property and seldom does Duck Unlimited, once they become an owner of a property, seldom do they keep it. They almost always

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turn it back over to a particular Game and Parks Commission or turn around and sell it, leaving a conservation easement on it so that the land can continue to be used as farmland, ranchland, whatever it is, but that hunting rights or rights protecting wetlands, you know, is maintained. So, and as it relates to that, any time we get a request in from the state of Nebraska to the Environmental Trust, if anything comes up from Ducks Unlimited, I always abstain from voting just, you know, even though I don't think there is a real conflict of interest; there may be. And any time we get anything close to something that where there might even be a perception of a conflict of interest, I abstain from voting and that is so noted in all the records. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR SMITH: All right, thank you very much. [CONFIRMATION]

JIM STUART: Yes, sir. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LANGEMEIER: Senator Dubas has joined us. [CONFIRMATION]

JIM STUART: Senator, good afternoon. What's the weather like in Nebraska?  
[CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LANGEMEIER: It's light rain. [CONFIRMATION]

JIM STUART: Ooh, well the farmers need the rain. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LANGEMEIER: And about 50 degrees. [CONFIRMATION]

JIM STUART: Oh boy. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LANGEMEIER: Well, we appreciate you coming in in full disclosure here. In my college years, I worked for your bank and the bank in the box division for four years putting money in ATMs, so. [CONFIRMATION]

JIM STUART: Really, good for you, good for you; that's terrific. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LANGEMEIER: That was a good experience. [CONFIRMATION]

JIM STUART: Well, you know, it took a great team to build that organization right. A lot of times I felt like I was just kind of standing there hanging on to all the good guys, just seeing what they were going to do. So I had a lot of fun during those years.  
[CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LANGEMEIER: You bet, it's good experience. [CONFIRMATION]

JIM STUART: Good. [CONFIRMATION]

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SENATOR LANGEMEIER: Any other questions? Seeing none, we'll let you go and enjoy California. [CONFIRMATION]

JIM STUART: Thank you, Senators. Good luck and thanks for all the good work you do. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LANGEMEIER: You bet, appreciate it. Thanks, Mr. Stuart. Bye-bye. [CONFIRMATION]

JIM STUART: Bye-bye now. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LANGEMEIER: It's a little odd not being able to see somebody, but it works. You've heard the opening on the confirmation of Mr. James Stuart, Jr., to the Nebraska Environmental Trust Board. Is there anyone that would like to testify in support? Seeing none. Is there anyone that would like to testify in opposition? Seeing none. Anyone want to testify in a neutral capacity? Seeing none. That concludes the hearing for the first of our appointments today. Our second one, Mr. Paul Dunn is present and welcome to the Natural Resources Committee. [CONFIRMATION]

PAUL DUNN: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LANGEMEIER: We appreciate you coming in. [CONFIRMATION]

PAUL DUNN: Glad to. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LANGEMEIER: And you have been reappointed again, is that right? [CONFIRMATION]

PAUL DUNN: That's correct. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LANGEMEIER: Okay, I did have that right; reappointed to the Nebraska Environmental Trust Board and you kind of got an example of what we're going to do so tell us a little bit about your experience, what you enjoy, what you don't or what you think we want to know. [CONFIRMATION]

PAUL DUNN: (Exhibit 2) Well it is such an honor to be a member of the Environmental Trust Board, to have this level of impact across the state to preserve our natural resources to conservation efforts. The expansion of recycling which is my current endeavor, I work for the city of Omaha and I'm recycling coordinator and worked in Lincoln's recycling office prior and also was out of state for three years working in recycling. As Mr. Stuart said, we go back to our charge which was put forth by the Legislature regularly. As individuals we look back on it as we are selecting grants; but

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also on a 5-year cycle. And in fact, in 2009 we did that again and looked at where should we be; what are our priorities for that 5-year period? We've done pretty well, we've, you know, had tweaking around the edges and made those changes as people across the state have helped us in refining those and we've been very pleased with the results, I believe. I have served as the chair of the board a number of times. I'm honored by my fellow board members that they have bestowed upon me that leadership position and I have great commitment to this organization. I take it very, very seriously. When I am not on the grants committee, I am one who reads through the grants. Certainly every 300-word synopsis that we have of them, but also if there are ones that are particular interest to me or something that I think is concerning I look at the actual grant. That is my commitment. This is...I've missed only one committee meeting since I have been on this board; never a full board meeting. And it's more than showing up, it's being involved; and I have been. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LANGEMEIER: Very good. We appreciate that. Are there any questions for Mr. Dunn? Senator Dubas. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR DUBAS: Thank you, Senator Langemeier and thank you, Mr. Dunn, for your service to the Environmental Trust. It is a very, very important program in our state. Over the course of your service on the Environmental Trust Board, have you seen the number of grant applications increase, decrease, stay pretty much the same? [CONFIRMATION]

PAUL DUNN: It fluctuates some. I mean the demand is always there. We have been fortunate with the Nebraska Lottery that they have run a very efficient lottery and one that has kept the gamblers in this state motivated. And so we have seen an increase in funds, but we have seen an increase in requests for funds. It has not made the decision-making more money, has not made the decisions any easier for selecting the grants. There are many things we could do and we've spread that amongst all of our areas very well, I believe, and across the state very well. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR DUBAS: That was going to be my next question as far as the diversity of the grants, and if you had enough grants that you would consider quality grants in all of the areas of awards that you give. [CONFIRMATION]

PAUL DUNN: Yes. Quality between something that would be a waste-oriented one versus a habitat, yes, there's definitely quality in all of those. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR DUBAS: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LANGEMEIER: Very good. Senator Carlson. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CARLSON: Thank you, Senator Langemeier. Paul, knowing that you've

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served on the Environmental Trust for a pretty good period of time and I think you're well aware I've had some issues with some things of the Trust. On the other hand, I've said it more than once publicly how grateful I am for what the Trust does and the fact that our work in removing the vegetation from the streambeds of the Republican and a good portion of the Platte has been very, very successful. But it is successful today as an ongoing project because of the Environmental Trust and NRCS. And so I'm very grateful for that. My question for you is, what do you think is the best thing that the Environmental Trust does and what do you think is the thing they're the worst at?  
[CONFIRMATION]

PAUL DUNN: You're asking a parent to basically pick their favorite child. That's an unfair question slightly. There have been some marvelous projects out there and all we do is fund them. It is the organizations that are on the ground that are doing this work. And they toil very long and hard over every one of these; and we stretch these dollars.  
[CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CARLSON: I'm going to interrupt you, because I'm really driving at policy-wise, not necessarily projects. [CONFIRMATION]

PAUL DUNN: Okay. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CARLSON: I'm not asking for a worse project. [CONFIRMATION]

PAUL DUNN: Okay. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CARLSON: But policy-wise and the way the Trust does things, what would you say is the real strength and what's a weakness? [CONFIRMATION]

PAUL DUNN: Policy-wise. I guess I could come up with a weakness and that is that we are allowed to fund mandated activities when it is involved with remediation. Specifically, we funded cleaning up at Mead. And I think that personally goes a little bit beyond what the intent was. But we did it, and that's a good thing. I'm not saying that we didn't need to clean up the facilities at Mead. But if we disallow things that are mandated activities, but then allow in remediation, I kind of wonder if those are...that's a bit at odds to me. But we have easily worked within it...and we have funded several things that fall into that sort of criteria because they are appropriate; because they do protect either natural wildlife habitat or human that are in the area. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CARLSON: Now in general, the projects that receive awards from the Trust, or groups that may on a rather regular basis ask for dollars from the Trust, do you really feel like there's good oversight on how they use those dollars and are there instances that you can think of where it was determined because of good oversight that they're not using the dollars the correct way and a decision would be made to recover some of

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those dollars or certainly not to continue awarding grants? [CONFIRMATION]

PAUL DUNN: Certainly. We have recovered dollars when we have found things that have gone amiss. And unfortunately one of those activities was in recycling. That's sort of an embarrassment to me being in that industry. We had a grantee who sold equipment that was funded through Environmental Trust dollars and we are getting repaid for that. So there...that's one of those times, and there are enough people who are grant recipients and who network with one another. The grapevine is pretty strong. We know what...we have a good ear out there of what's going on. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CARLSON: One more question. How often or does it occur that you really contemplate the effect of a grant and the way it might negatively affect areas of the state in terms of tax dollars? [CONFIRMATION]

PAUL DUNN: Taxes must be paid on funded activities from us. You're talking about acquisitions and that nature. That's a requirement. So the impact is not there. We do have...for those agencies that cannot fund as a...that do not pay taxes and are not allowed to, basically the natural resources districts, we have a mechanism to bridge that and give them tax...fund the taxes for a period of time as an adjustment for the county. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CARLSON: Okay. Now I'm not...give me an example, would you of that. [CONFIRMATION]

PAUL DUNN: Um...of the natural resource district? [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CARLSON: Yeah. [CONFIRMATION]

PAUL DUNN: Um... [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CARLSON: And how does that work? [CONFIRMATION]

PAUL DUNN: Well, what we do is we find out the current taxes are and then we give them...the county, we direct compensation towards the county for...is it five or ten years? [CONFIRMATION]

MARK BROHMAN: I think most of them are 15. [CONFIRMATION]

PAUL DUNN: Fifteen. I had to consult the expert here. Fifteen years worth of that money. And the county is then...it is up to them how they choose to use that money. They could look at it as a one-time windfall and spend it. They could invest it and work off of the income from the investment or they could parcel it out as 15 individual payments. [CONFIRMATION]

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SENATOR CARLSON: So is it your understanding then if a quarter of irrigated land is purchased and the taxes on it have been \$4,000 a year, that that \$4,000 would be paid for 15 years? [CONFIRMATION]

PAUL DUNN: That's essentially how it works, yes. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CARLSON: That's the way you would understand it? [CONFIRMATION]

PAUL DUNN: Yes. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CARLSON: Okay, thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LANGEMEIER: Any other questions? Seeing none, thank you very much, well done. [CONFIRMATION]

PAUL DUNN: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LANGEMEIER: You have heard the opening on the appointment of Mr. Paul Dunn. Is there anyone that would like to testify in support? Seeing none. Is there anyone that would like to testify in opposition? Seeing none. Is there anyone that would like to testify in a neutral capacity? Seeing none. That concludes the hearing for Mr. Dunn. Thank you very much for coming in, we appreciate it. Our third and final one is Ms. Gloria Erickson. Welcome back... [CONFIRMATION]

GLORIA ERICKSON: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LANGEMEIER: ...for your reappointment to the Environmental Trust Board for another six years. [CONFIRMATION]

GLORIA ERICKSON: Say that, makes me pretty old by the time I get off this. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LANGEMEIER: Go ahead and tell us a little bit about what you have liked, what you may not have liked and what you hope to accomplish over the next six years. [CONFIRMATION]

GLORIA ERICKSON: (Exhibit 3) Okay. Well, I grew up in...I was raised on a farm in...northeast of...northwest of Hastings, Nebraska, and I have spent a great deal of my life outside. I love the outdoors and all that it teaches us. I actually...I graduated from Midland College in Fremont and the first two years that I taught school and I was a science teacher, all high school and middle school, and the first two years that I taught were in Wolbach, just not...just down the road from Fullerton. And I always thought of



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that as my basic training because I had 7th, 8th, and 9th grade science, I had biology, chemistry, and physics. So six preparations a day, plus I had the girls pep club and the cheerleaders and we were in two different basketball conferences so we had games on Tuesday night, Friday and Saturday. So I had a lot to do; so that was my basic training. Then I went out to Wyoming to teach school and got another perspective of land that is not agricultural. And I enjoyed my time out there, but I did return after about five years and I came back to Holdrege to teach school. I started work on my masters; came back to Holdrege; met my husband and the rest, as we say, is history. So we farm and farmed and have cattle; had a cow/calf operation and a small feed lot. I have seen a lot of changes in the agricultural community with the advancement of technology and I will say that if you want to know what the Environmental Trust has done in helping landowners deal with water problems, for example, they have been involved as a partner many times with NRCS on some of the programs that in which we can enhance some wetlands. But at the same time, then solve a water problem on the rest of the land so it makes the production more efficient. And then, and you know, if I could just...I wanted to say this, when you ask the question about what's the most fun or what's the most...what I think is the most important thing that the Environmental Trust does as far as their projects, and those are the ones in which the public is involved and have a place to recreate and children learn about the outdoors and how natural processes work and so we've done a lot of those. We provided recreation for towns, whether it's dredging out the silt out of their local pond or their lake, to actually doing equipment, again, for recreation, for the town's people. So it's a real help to rural Nebraska because a lot of those...you know, there's not always a lot of funding for some of those projects other than through the Environmental Trust and what it does is it...I mean, it really enhances their quality of life and I think that my feeling about the Trust is that that is, in fact, what it does for the state of Nebraska. Not only does it help with environmental causes and issues and problems, but it also deals with people and their quality of life because that's really what ultimately we're supporting, this good life in Nebraska. So if you have any questions. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LANGEMEIER: Very good. Are there any questions? Senator...where do you want to start? Senator Dubas, do you have a question? [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR DUBAS: No. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LANGEMEIER: Senator Carlson. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CARLSON: Oh, you didn't have any questions? Well I'm going to put Gloria on the hot seat. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LANGEMEIER: We hold it against her that you represent her. [CONFIRMATION]

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SENATOR CARLSON: Okay thank you, Senator Langemeier. Yeah, I was afraid, I was hoping, Gloria, they didn't question one of your references on here. [CONFIRMATION]

GLORIA ERICKSON: I know, I know. That was because you know something about my fund-raising ability. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CARLSON: Well, I know this about Gloria that if you want something done, you ask Gloria to do it and it gets done and it gets done very, very well. So I've had experience that way. I understand that. What do you see as the...some real challenges going forward for the Environmental Trust? [CONFIRMATION]

GLORIA ERICKSON: Yeah, that's a good question. And there are a lot of challenges and I'll tell you what the most controversial, the most...the projects that we have the most difficulty with are those where we acquire, where we're helping an entity acquire property. And we take it out of private ownership perhaps and put it into public ownership. And let me say this, that not all of those projects are the same. I mean, there's a place and time when it's absolutely appropriate that we acquire some property where its best use is for recreation or for specific habitat needs. Now that's a good thing. But it's always controversial to purchase property that has been producing. And your question on the taxes, what happens and this is something...you know, policy-wise too, we're always working on to make it work better. But when you take irrigated farm ground at \$4,000 for the quarter and you change that and you put an easement on that and then it becomes grassland, now it's not...now it's not going to be assessed at \$4,000 an acre. That's what happens with the counties; that's their problem. They're not going to get \$4,000 for that, they're going to get one, whatever that assessed value is. So there is a...in some of these instances, there is a reduction in what these counties get to work with. And some of these counties, especially those that have a lot of...have more public land than is normal, that \$3,000 a year can be a real detriment to them. So there we've got...we've got to work with the county boards and come up with some policy that's going to work for them, because that's...otherwise we're not going to be very successful in some of these areas. And we've had some problems this last year or two. And we've got to deal with it. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CARLSON: Well and I appreciate that you understand that because whether it's a difference of a thousand or 2,000 or 3,000 a year, that's forever. [CONFIRMATION]

GLORIA ERICKSON: Yeah, yes, that's forever. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CARLSON: And so it's not a one-time deal. [CONFIRMATION]

GLORIA ERICKSON: Right, right. [CONFIRMATION]

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SENATOR CARLSON: I just...for the other members, I recall that Gloria and I were on the same...what do you call those boats that go with the big propeller in back.  
[CONFIRMATION]

GLORIA ERICKSON: Oh, yeah. Air boats. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CARLSON: Air boats, and we took a ride down the Republican. I wondered if we were going to get through or not. [CONFIRMATION]

GLORIA ERICKSON: Yeah, I know. Right, right. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CARLSON: And Gloria saw very clearly how and agreed that that needed to be removed and so I appreciate your impact on what was able to be done there.  
[CONFIRMATION]

GLORIA ERICKSON: Right. Right. Yeah, there's a lot of...you know, land requires management at all times whether...and in a lot of our natural management like fire, which is very important in controlling the western red cedar, you just can't use that now that much. And so there again, the Environmental Trust has worked with entities, with Game and Parks and the Rainwater Basin to produce these burn units so that...and for training on the use of fire. I mean, it all has to be very professionally done, because the last thing you want to do is let that fire get away from you. I mean it happens, so. So anyway, so it's...so the land acquisition, you know, if I had my druthers, I would say that, you know, productive farmland probably shouldn't be on the acquisitions. That...there's a best use table for certain kinds of soils and farmland and such, and I think that when possible we should avoid some of those acquisitions. And then also on the easement business, they don't always have to be...and I don't know, I have a real heartburn with perpetual easements, because none of us are smart enough to know what's going to be happening in 50 years or 100 years. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CARLSON: Well I'm going to go back to highest and best use and whatever...again, I appreciate that you understand that, whatever impact you can have to help others understand that, and if there would be need for some kind of legislation that would indicate that when land is taken out of production or drastically altered that the taxes should continue based on its highest and best use and that would...we still may not like some of it, but that certainly would take away a lot of the hurt for the county that's involved. But I appreciate, Gloria, your service and what you've done and thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LANGEMEIER: Senator Smith. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR SMITH: Ms. Erickson, thanks for being here today. And I really like what I've heard you say. It's great to see that different perspective represented on the

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Environmental Trust, so thank you very much. [CONFIRMATION]

GLORIA ERICKSON: I appreciate that. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LANGEMEIER: I too want to thank you for your work. I've had the opportunity to have conversations with you over time. But I want to get a little off subject here, I know your background, you've been on a wide variety of hunting activity boards from Game and Parks to Safari Club to...and I could go on and on. [CONFIRMATION]

GLORIA ERICKSON: Oh yeah, all of them. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LANGEMEIER: Tell me which one you like the most and why.  
[CONFIRMATION]

GLORIA ERICKSON: Oh, you know, probably...now I'm not... [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LANGEMEIER: This might be worse than picking your favorite child.  
[CONFIRMATION]

GLORIA ERICKSON: No, no, actually that isn't hard at all. If I had to just...somebody told me, okay, all you get to hunt, you just pick one animal and that's all you're going to get to hunt from now on and it wouldn't even...and I've not been on that board, but it wouldn't be any problem in my mind that that would be turkeys, because you get all camouflaged up and you get out there in the dark and you sit and you hear all the sounds that are going on around you. And the things that you see, little birds come and they sit right down by your head, and then you try to attract this tom turkey, but while you're attracting that tom turkey, sometimes you attract coyotes and they literally run you over, well almost. But I mean I've had such wonderful experiences with...with...and appreciating the natural resources that we have in this state from that activity. And this morning, actually, I drove past a turkey that was just about...and it was tom that was about to cross the road and of course I hit a deer the other...a couple of weeks ago. So now I'm going to have to travel with a cooler and a skinning knife, I guess, so I don't waste all that venison. But anyway, so that would be my...that would be what I would like to do. And I have a grandson who is ten and we are actually going turkey hunting this spring, he and I. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LANGEMEIER: Well, very good. [CONFIRMATION]

GLORIA ERICKSON: And he's going to have to sit still. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LANGEMEIER: That might be a challenge. [CONFIRMATION]

GLORIA ERICKSON: So I'm thinking about getting a little tent, a little pop up, hide.

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[CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LANGEMEIER: Very good. I would say Mr. Stuart in his earlier testimony said that he was...that not all Nebraskans are hunters; I would say everybody that has a car in Nebraska is a hunter. [CONFIRMATION]

GLORIA ERICKSON: Unfortunately that's true. I tell you what, I mean, it...I am sure, however, I will have to say that I have literally driven hundreds of thousands of miles in deer country and have never come close to hitting a deer until a couple of weeks ago. And I always wondered, well how does that happen? Well, they just are there; they just appear, it seems like. I don't know, but anyway. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LANGEMEIER: I've hit one too. I would say, it just came out of nowhere. [CONFIRMATION]

GLORIA ERICKSON: They do a lot of damage; and so can turkeys, by the way. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LANGEMEIER: Yeah. Are there any other questions? Senator Carlson. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CARLSON: Thank you, Senator Langemeier. You triggered another question. You're aware that Senator Pirsch has a constitutional amendment, CA40, to guarantee hunting, fishing, and trapping privileges to Nebraska residents forever. Is that appropriate? [CONFIRMATION]

GLORIA ERICKSON: You know, I think it is. And I think...and I don't think we should clutter up the Constitution with lots of extra language, but if you look at that amendment, it's very brief and it does allow for that. There's only one state that had the presence of mind to put that in their original constitution and I think that was New Hampshire and they have it in there. And what has happened is that our culture has grown so distant from our roots and from those original hunters and fishermen who were sustaining themselves. I mean, that's what it was all about. And you know, our founding fathers knew that...shouldn't have got me started on this...our founding fathers knew that if people could feed themselves, they were not going to be overpowered by their government as they were...I mean, in England, you know, everything belonged to the lords and the nobles and so that was the...kind of the club over the heads of the serfs, because we're going to feed you because you can't go out and get any of your own game because the game belongs to the king. So I actually do. I tell you what, when you have a culture that comes up with...they're so distant from the source of their food and fiber that they would pass a law that you cannot render horses and that passed in Congress. Now, they can do most anything; they don't understand that...we've got to do...we just don't turn these horses loose and let them starve to death. And that's

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exactly what's happening right now. So from Elm Creek, from the enclosure there they're going down to Fort Riley, they turn them loose until they starve to death. They don't feed them; they just let nature take its course. So yes, so I think that we have a society that does not understand the importance of hunting as a management tool. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CARLSON: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LANGEMEIER: Very good. Any other questions? Seeing none, thank you very much for coming down. [CONFIRMATION]

GLORIA ERICKSON: Very good. I'm done? [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LANGEMEIER: You're all done; thank you, yes. Now we have to do the ritual. Is there anyone that would like to testify in support? Seeing none. Is there anyone that would like to testify in opposition? Seeing none. Is there anyone that would like to testify in a neutral capacity? Seeing none. That concludes our hearing for Mrs. Erickson and our hearings for the day. And thank you all for coming down, we really appreciate you coming in for these. Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]