

Transcript Prepared By the Clerk of the Legislature
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Natural Resources Committee
January 19, 2018

[CONFIRMATION]

The Committee on Natural Resources met at 1:30 p.m. on Friday, January 19, 2018, in Room 1525 of the State Capitol, Lincoln, Nebraska, for the purpose of conducting a public hearing on gubernatorial appointment. Senators present: Dan Hughes, Chairperson; Bruce Bostelman, Vice Chairperson; Joni Albrecht; Suzanne Geist; Rick Kolowski; John McCollister; and Dan Quick. Senators absent: Lynne Walz.

SENATOR HUGHES: Welcome to the Natural Resources Committee hearing room. We've got a very light schedule this morning, one appointment, and then a briefing from Director Fassett of the Department of Natural Resources. So I'm going to dispense with the formalities and just ask the committee members to introduce themselves. I am Senator Dan Hughes. I represent District 44, ten counties in southwest Nebraska. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Rick Kolowski, District 31, in southwest Omaha. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GEIST: Suzanne Geist, District 25, which is the east side of Lincoln, Walton, and Waverly. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR QUICK: Dan Quick, District 35, I have Grand Island. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR HUGHES: Joni. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR ALBRECHT: Joni Albrecht, District 17, Thurston, Wayne, and Dakota Counties in northeast Nebraska. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR MCCOLLISTER: John McCollister, District 20, central Omaha. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR BOSTELMAN: Bruce Bostelman, District 23, Saunders, Butler, and Colfax Counties. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR HUGHES: If the senators may come and go, we are introducing bills in other committees, so do not be concerned if somebody gets up and walks out. Assisting us today we have Lee-Ann Sims from Lincoln; she's a junior at UNL. And also Joe Gruber from Omaha. He is a senior at UNL as well. We do have...welcome Precious McKesson. She is the Urban Affairs clerk and she is just observing with Mandy today. The staff for the committee, to my left is Laurie Lage, committee counsel, and Mandy Mizerski is the committee clerk. So with that, we

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have an appointment to the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, Mr. Douglas Zingula. Welcome. If you would like to come up and just give us a little background on yourself. Why you want to be on the Game and Parks Commission. [CONFIRMATION]

DOUGLAS ZINGULA: (Exhibit 1) Sure. First of all, thank you everyone for having me here today. My name is Doug Zingula. As far as why I want to be, you know, I guess a little background from where I'm from and what I've done. I was born in east central Iowa, went to the school at Iowa State. Came to Nebraska in about 1981 after graduating there. Started right out of school with Cabela's within the merchandising department there. The company, and it was a good fit, right place at the right time. Young company getting started and fresh out of college, so everything just kind of clicked, and 32 years later I was still there and kind of rose up through the ranks as vice president in merchandising. So just kind of a storybook career, you know, from my family's standpoint, so. I made a decision in 2013 to take early retirement. I did a few things that I always kind of wanted to do and, you know, from there, shortly thereafter, I had the privilege to be involved or meet some folks with Nebraska Game and Parks and get involved with some different projects up in the northwest corner of the state. I had spent a lot of time up there through the course of the years with Cabela's just hunting and fishing up there, and so met some folks there, got involved, and just really enjoyed it. I enjoyed just the different projects that everybody was doing there and also it kind of gave me an opportunity to reestablish a new family. I guess, you know, I'm just being honest. I mean, Cabela's was a very family-oriented company, just a tremendous amount of friendships, you know, through the course of the years. And so when I left that, you know, there was something...something was missing a little bit and when I discovered Game and Parks and working up there and the people, it was kind of reminiscent of the older days with Cabela's and so it really resonated with me. So, you know, one thing kind of leads to another and was involved with Nebraska Big Game Society as a result of just meeting people and just...I could say one thing after another leads to another. This opportunity came up, you know, here this last fall and there was some discussions and frankly I jumped at the opportunity to possibly be able to serve. So as a result, I guess, I'm here today. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR HUGHES: Okay. Thank you. Are there questions for Mr. Zingula? Yes, Senator Kolowski. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Doug, when you look at your background and the experiences you've had, the training you've had, and all the years in different places, what would be the major strength or two that you would say you bring to this board compared to others? [CONFIRMATION]

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DOUGLAS ZINGULA: Well, number one, I guess kind of at a grassroots level. I mean, I've had a love for the outdoors and wildlife since I was a little kid and certainly Cabela's offered me even a bigger variety and more experiences than, you know, I think I ever could have possibly imagined. But along with that from the business side of it, coming up through the company, I mean learning and understanding the part of the business whether it be the financial side of it or negotiations. You know, but I think probably at the end of the day the biggest thing is just working with people and knowing how to get along and at the end of the day everybody coming out of there with the decision that benefits the majority. So those are kind of just some of the highlights, I guess, that I would say I would look at as strengths. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR HUGHES: Additional questions? Senator McCollister. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR MCCOLLISTER: Yeah, I just want to thank you for your willingness to serve and I think that your merchandising background is going to serve the Game and Parks very well. So, thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

DOUGLAS ZINGULA: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR HUGHES: Additional questions? Senator Geist. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GEIST: Thank you for being willing to serve. I appreciate that as well. I'm just wondering if you have a priority that you're looking at, that the Game and Parks might be doing that you would really like to get involved with? [CONFIRMATION]

DOUGLAS ZINGULA: Well, certainly, you know my passion...I've had a passion for wildlife and in particular, big game, large game. And, you know, having lived in the western part of the state, you know, for more than half of my life now, it offers just a unique situation out there. I mean, we have everything, from mule deer, white-tailed antelope, elk, bighorn sheep, mountain lions. So, you know, to continue on, I mean there's, I think, some issues that are affecting some of our game animals out there. There's game species out there, so really want to help and be focused and do whatever we can to do that, as well as Nebraska is an ag state and certainly 95, 97 percent private lands. Want to do everything I can to continue those relationships when working back with Game and Parks to ensure that, you know, we have access and the ability to work with wildlife for the betterment of the whole state. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GEIST: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

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SENATOR HUGHES: Okay. Additional questions? You mentioned big game sheep. There was a record taken in Nebraska, do you have that information? [CONFIRMATION]

DOUGLAS ZINGULA: Yeah, just done just recently. A gentleman from California had purchased the auction tag from a year ago and they harvested a ram down in the Wildcat Hills. I'm not sure I have it exactly right. I think 195, which would be the new state record for harvest. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR HUGHES: Okay. And that would compare quite favorably with other states? [CONFIRMATION]

DOUGLAS ZINGULA: Oh, that's a dandy, wherever you want to go. (Laughter)
[CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR HUGHES: Okay. I was not aware of that, so thank you. Other additional questions? Seeing none, thank you, Mr. Zingula, for coming before our committee and thank you for your service to the state. [CONFIRMATION]

DOUGLAS ZINGULA: Thank you, everyone, for the support and I look forward to serving. Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR HUGHES: Okay. Is there anyone who wishes to speak in support of Mr. Zingula? You can go back and sit down. Anyone wishing to support Mr. Zingula? Anyone wishing to speak in opposition to Mr. Zingula? Anyone wishing to speak in the neutral position? Seeing none, that will close our hearing for that Game and Parks committee appointment. [CONFIRMATION]