

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Natural Resources Committee February 16, 2023

BOSTELMAN: All right. Good afternoon, everyone. Welcome to the Natural Resources Committee. I'm Senator Bruce Bostelman from Brainard, representing the 23rd Legislative District. I serve as Chair of the committee. The committee will take up the bills in the order posted. This public hearing today is your opportunity to be a part of the legislative process and to express your position on the proposed legislation before us. If you're planning to testify today, please fill out one of the green testifier sheets that are on the table in the back of the room. Be sure to print clearly and fill out-- fill it out completely. When it is your turn to come forward to testify, give the testifier sheet to the page or to the committee clerk. If you do not wish to testify but would like to indicate your position on a bill, there are also white sign-in sheets back on the table. These sheets will be included as an exhibit in the official hearing room-- record. When you come up to testify, please speak clearly into the microphone. Tell us your name and spell your first and last name to ensure we get an accurate record. We will begin each bill hearing today with the introducer's opening statement, followed by proponents of the bill, then opponents, and finally by anyone speaking in the neutral capacity. We will finish with a closing statement by the introducer if they wish to give one. We will be using a five-minute light system for all testifiers. When you begin your testimony, the light on the table will be green. When the yellow light comes on, you have one minute remaining and the red light indicates you need to wrap up your final thought and stop. Questions from the committee, committee may follow. Also, committee members may come and go during the hearing. This has nothing to do with the importance of the bills being heard, it is just part of the process as senators may have bills to introduce in other committees. A few final items to facilitate today's hearing. If you have handouts or copies of your testimony, please bring up at least ten copies and give them to the page. Please silence or turn off your cell phones. Verbal outbursts or applause are not permitted in the hearing room. Such behavior may cause for you to be asked to leave the hearing. Finally, committee procedures for all committees states that written position letters to be included in the record must be submitted by 12 noon the last business day before the scheduled hearing on that particular bill. The only acceptable method of submission is via the Legislature's website at nebraskalegislature.gov. You may submit a written letter for the record or testify in person at the hearing, but not both. Written position letters will be included in the official hearing record, but only those testifying in person before the committee will be included

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on the committee statement. I will now have committee members with us today introduce themselves starting on my far left.

SLAMA: Julie Slama, District 1: Otoe, Johnson, Nemaha, Pawnee, and Richardson Counties.

HUGHES: Jana Hughes, District 24: Seward, York, Polk, and a little bit of Butler County.

BOSTELMAN: And my far right.

BRANDT: Senator Tom Brandt, District 32: Fillmore, Thayer, Jefferson, Saline, and southwestern Lancaster Counties.

JACOBSON: Hello, I'm Mike Jacobson, District 42. I represent Thomas, Hooker, McPherson, Logan, Lincoln, and three-quarters of Perkins County.

MOSER: Mike Moser. I represent District 22, it's Platte County and most of Stanton County.

BOSTELMAN: Senator Moser also serves as Vice Chairman of this committee. Also assisting the committee today: to my left is our substitute legal counsel and we thank her very much for helping us out, Laurie Holman; and to my far right is our committee clerk, Laurie Vollertsen. Our page for the committee today is Trent Kadavy. Thank you very much for being here and helping us today. With that, we will begin today's hearing with our first one, LB120. Mr. Herchenbach will open on us for the committee.

RILEY HERCHENBACH: Good afternoon, Chairman Bostelman and members of the Natural Resources Committee. My name is Riley Herchenbach, that's R-i-l-e-y H-e-r-c-h-e-n-b-a-c-h. I'm introducing this bill on behalf of the committee. LB120 is a shell bill. It does nothing substantive and is meant to be a placeholder in case an issue comes up later in session for which we need a vehicle to address something under the Natural Resources Committee's jurisdiction. Thanks.

BOSTELMAN: Thank you. As Mr. Herchenbach said, this is a shell bill or a placeholder bill for the committee. We did receive one proponent and 17 opponents to the shell bill. Additionally, due to the inclement weather an extent-- and an extension of the deadline for online position comments, there may be additional comments added to today's hearing record as an exhibit. With that, we will close the hearing on LB120. We'll open-- we'll now open up the hearing on LB121. Mr. Herchenbach, again, will open up for the committee.

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RILEY HERCHENBACH: Good afternoon, Chairman Bostelman and members of Natural Resources Committee. My name is Riley Herchenbach, spelled R-i-l-e-y H-e-r-c-h-e-n-b-a-c-h. I'm introducing this bill on behalf of the committee. LB121 is a shell bill. It does nothing substantive and it's meant to be a placeholder in case an issue comes up later in session for which we need a vehicle to address something under the Natural Resources Committee's jurisdiction. Thank you.

BOSTELMAN: Thank you, Mr. Herchenbach. This, again, is a shell bill or a, a placeholder bill for the committee. There were no letters received on this. However, additionally, due to inclement weather and an extension of the deadline for online position comments, there may be additional comments added to today's hearing record as an exhibit. With that, I will turn the committee over to Vice Chairman Moser.

MOSER: Welcome to your committee, Senator Bostelman.

BOSTELMAN: OK. Thank you. Good afternoon. Good afternoon, Vice Chairman Moser and members of the Natural Resources Committee. My name is Bruce Bostelman, spelled B-r-u-c-e B-o-s-t-e-l-m-a-n, and I represent Legislative District 23. I'm here today to introduce LB568. First, I am providing you with a white copy amendment, AM357, which the page is handing out now, which replaces the bill. My opening will be specific to the amendment. The purpose of LB568 is to establish the Nuclear and Hydrogen Development Act. The act directs the Department of Economic Development to establish the Nuclear and Hydrogen Industry Working [SIC] Group. The working group will identify workforce needs of the nuclear and hydrogen industries and collaboratively develop educational programming to train and develop a workforce critical to our nation's growing energy needs. The working group will consist of 12 members appointed by the Governor to include the following members: two from the nuclear industry, two from the hydrogen industry, one member of the community college system, one member of the state college system, one representative of a public power district, the director of the Department of Economic Development or designee, the Chair of Natural Resources or a designee, the Chair of Government, Military and Veterans Affairs or a designee, and two at-large members. The amendment differs from the original bill that it appropriates \$200,000 from the General Fund, which may be utilized for lodging and travel reimbursements as designated. The original bill appropriated \$5 million, which could be used for equipment, curriculum, and programming. However, after some discussion, I felt that it would be prudent to first study workforce development needs and devise a plan that best addressed these needs. Once that's completed, the working group may request additional funding from the Legislature for specific

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needs identified by the working group. The amendment also eliminates appropriation-- appropriation's position and adds two at-large positions. This act is targeted to address nuclear and hydrogen industry needs by training, building, and supporting a highly skilled workforce. This workforce will not only address the needs of both industries, but also provides programming to establish a skilled workforce that will support many other industries statewide. In the hydrogen industry, Monolith is set to expand its facilities in the near future with the Olive Creek 2 plant. The construction, operation, and maintenance of the OC2 plant will require individuals with specialized training and skill sets. I believe this working group will not only benefit the OC2 plant, but also further workforce needs if Nebraska-- Nebraska's application as a hydrogen hub is awarded by the Department of Energy and other hydrogen industries in the state. The nuclear energy, energy industry is also rapidly evolving. With new advanced reactors, SMRs, and micro reactors coming online in just a few years, the need for developing the new workforce is now. Last year, the Legislature passed LB1100, which provided for a feasibility study to be completed for a potential siting of advanced nuclear reactor technology. NPPD is currently completing a study and should they go ahead with bringing in an advanced reactor, having a workforce ready to operate these advanced systems will be critical. With the new advances in the hydrogen and nuclear industries, it is vital that we develop a skilled workforce that can meet the, the industries' needs. The working group will spearhead a dynamic and collaborative process, bringing industry and education together to, to develop the needed coursework and opportunities for Nebraska's making Nebraska a leader in this type of programming. There will be, there will be individuals following me that will provide additional insight to this process and will speak not only to the need but also to their successful experiences in workforce education and training. I urge the committee to advance LB568 to General File and I'll be glad to answer any questions that you may have.

MOSER: Questions from the committee? Thank you. Anyone here to speak in support of this bill? If you're planning to testify, please come forward and take a seat in the front row. Welcome to the Natural Resources Committee.

JOEL MICHAELIS: Well, thank you very much and good afternoon. It is a pleasure to be here today. My name is Joel Michaelis, J-o-e-l M-i-c-h-a-e-l-i-s. I come to you today in my capacity as the vice president of instruction at Southeast Community College. And when I found out about this bill, the, the idea of a community college person being on there, of course, the, the Cooper Nuclear plant is in our

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area. And, and, and we have, as you may be aware, the Southeast Community College, along with the other community colleges in the state, do a great deal in terms of training workforce for Nebraska and southeast is certainly along with those in that it has a number of technical training programs, one of which is our energy generation program. As part of our energy-- and, and we have a number of graduates who go out and 90 percent of them stay in Nebraska and they go work at places like NPPD, OPPD, LES, just to name a few. Within that program, we also provide students with the opportunity to graduate with an AAS that includes a nuclear focus and they receive an NUCP certificate that stands for the Nuclear Uniform Curriculum Program. SCC has the only such certificate and program in the state of Nebraska and it's also one of, I believe, less than ten in the country. I, I, I-- we-- how we would partner with Nebraska with the University of Nebraska in this, I believe they would be doing things more along the lines of the engineering. They already have an engineering school. In fact, I believe it's the-- I saw something just the other, other day that they're building a new facility for their, for their engineering program. They could speak more to that, more to that side of it. We prepare operators, the ones that are going in and actually operating in those plants. We have graduates of our program at Cooper, we have them at nuclear facilities around the United States. I think one just recently went to work in upstate New York. So we would be happy to partner with folks on this and become a nuclear training hub for the country. I think this is needed. There's not a state that's reaching out and working with nuclear, with nuclear plants and, and-- like this. And it would be, you know, people talk all the time about a drain-- a brain drain, I think this would be a brain gain for Nebraska. And with that, I'll answer any questions you might have.

MOSER: OK. Questions from the committee?

SLAMA: Thank you.

MOSER: Senator Slama, thank you.

SLAMA: Thank you, Vice Chairman Moser. Someday you'll learn my name.

MOSER: I'll write it on my hand.

SLAMA: Not a question, but a comment. As somebody who's the daughter of someone who graduated from Southeast Community College and was able to work at Cooper Nuclear Station for 36 years, thank you so much for your work in encouraging our next generation of nuclear leaders.

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JOEL MICHAELIS: Thank you.

MOSER: Other comments? Thank you very much for your testimony.

JOEL MICHAELIS: Thank you.

MOSER: Anybody else to speak in support? Welcome to--

DAVID MADCHARO: Good afternoon.

MOSER: --Natural Resources.

DAVID MADCHARO: Thank you. My name is David Madcharo, D-a-v-i-d M-a-d-c-h-a-r-o, and I'm the energy generation operations program director at Southeast Community College and am intimately involved in this workforce development already. There is already a large amount of interest from industry. The companies that I speak with all the time, they are looking to find states to partner with to develop the next generation of workforce for their new nuclear initiatives. We've been doing this for 12 years now. We fill a large number of these industrial operator positions. These are all critical infrastructure positions. They will happen, it's just a matter of where. Nebraska taking a big lead in that would be a big feather in the cap of the state. As Joel said, we're not competing with anybody, we're a complement to the university system. We're providing that day-to-day, in-plant operator. It's something that every one of these companies want. They're already looking to partner. I think this is a golden opportunity for us to step forward. Thank you.

MOSER: All right. Questions from the committee? Senator Brandt.

BRANDT: Thank you, Vice Chair Moser. Thank you, Mr. Madcharo,--

DAVID MADCHARO: Yes.

BRANDT: --for appearing today. How many graduates do you have in a year's time?

DAVID MADCHARO: Typically, our graduate through both terms averages between 12 to upwards of 20.

BRANDT: And going through this program, what could I expect for a starting wage?

DAVID MADCHARO: In the power industries, the energy sector industries we serve, typically, right now it's in the \$30 to \$40 and up range.

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BRANDT: And these are--

DAVID MADCHARO: Per hour.

BRANDT: --these are primarily operators, is that where you're graduating?

DAVID MADCHARO: Yes.

BRANDT: And I would assume today they would be going into coal fired plants or, or--

DAVID MADCHARO: Coal fired and natural gas--

BRANDT: OK.

DAVID MADCHARO: --nuclear plants. Some of the support industries like Monolith in Hallam, those kind of critical component industries, if you will. But our operators also feed into water treatment systems, transmission distribution systems, anything that really involves infrastructure.

BRANDT: All right. Thank you.

MOSER: Senator Jacobson.

JACOBSON: Thank you, Vice Chair Moser. I guess my question is a little bit along the same line as Senator Brandt. You're telling me that, as I understand it, Southeast Community College is the only community college currently offering this, this programming. I assume that's because of the Monolith and, and Cooper Nuclear Station. Is, is that primarily why that is or--

DAVID MADCHARO: There are other community colleges that do related operations oriented. Metro has one, but we are the only one that does a nuclear focused one. Our program is audited to the INPO standards, which are industry standards for training nuclear professionals and operators, they come in and audit us, we're a partner with Cooper Nuclear Station. They do our auditing, too, what's called the ACAD standards that come from input, which is the Institute of Nuclear Power Operators, I believe.

JACOBSON: And, I guess, that's what I was driving at is that so where are you getting your instructors from and where are their credentials coming from to be able to offer this, this supporting education?

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DAVID MADCHARO: Myself, I'm actually a University of Nebraska graduate, spent a little time in the Navy. Our other instructors come from either Navy or industry, and then we also have support due to the requirements for NUCP that Cooper actually helps provide us a adjunct instructor as well. So most of our people are all coming directly from industry in some manner.

JACOBSON: I get the sense that maybe NPPD is going to be testifying today, too, so I might hold off and ask some questions there.

DAVID MADCHARO: OK.

JACOBSON: Thank you.

MOSER: Do you use Homer Simpson in any of your educational materials?
[LAUGHTER]

DAVID MADCHARO: Only as a point of what is not true.

MOSER: How to eat a donut without flipping any of the wrong switches.

DAVID MADCHARO: Mostly it's a case of don't eat a donut in the control room, but.

MOSER: Don't set your pop on the counter where you can spill it. OK. Any other questions? Thank you very much. Next supporter. Welcome.

AMY OSTERMEYER: Thank you. Good afternoon, Vice Chair Moser and members of the Natural Resources Committee. My name is Amy Ostermeyer. That's A-m-y O-s-t-e-r-m-e-y-e-r. I am the executive vice president of development at Monolith, a clean hydrogen and advanced manufacturing company headquartered here in Lincoln. I'm also proudly serving on the Governor-appointed hydrogen hub working group created by the Legislature last year. It's an honor to be here again and before the committee. I did have the privilege of testifying at the beginning of the month in favor of LB656 which will enhance our efforts to secure funding in the hydrogen hub program. On behalf of Monolith, we appreciate Senator Bostelman for bringing this bill forward and the committee support of the Nebraska hydrogen industry. You may have heard a lot about the hydrogen industry and how much opportunity it provides, both economically and with our goals for a cleaner planet. The nature of clean hydrogen production is-- requires very sophisticated technology and cutting-edge processes to produce reliable, safe, valuable products that the country needs. This requires years of research, dedication, and highly skilled people to accomplish. Monolith has proudly perfected this process right here in

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Nebraska. Currently, this proprietary technology uses carbon-free electricity to convert natural gas into carbon black and clean hydrogen without producing any carbon dioxide. Our flagship location, Olive Creek, is located in Hallam. It was completed in 2020 and is successfully operating and producing product for our customers today. I'm here today to testify in support of this bill, the Nuclear and Hydrogen Development Act. This important bill will provide the resources and collaboration that is needed to sustain and grow Nebraska's position on the forefront of the hydrogen and nuclear industries. Current growth projections for the United States estimate that our country's hydrogen economy could generate \$140 billion per year in revenue and support 700,000 jobs a year. By 2050, these same reports from the Department of Energy put these numbers at \$750 billion per year in revenue and over 3.4 million jobs. The Nebraska Unicameral and state leadership here created an environment that promotes innovation and private sector growth. So Nebraska can benefit from this emerging sector, our state must continue to build this work and invest in its people. The act advances this goal by giving Nebraska and the state and community colleges the tools to adequately train workers for lifelong careers in the hydrogen and nuclear sectors. These jobs encompass a diverse array of professions, from engineers to operations managers, material scientists, plant operators, software developers, environmental experts, mechanical project managers, sales professionals, safety team members, just to name a few. The workforce needs of a high-tech employer like Monolith and our colleagues in the nuclear industry are vast. The working group being discussed today will build a framework to attract more high-tech employers, just like Monolith, ready to put our students to work. Recognizing the need to recruit top talent, Monolith has partnered actually with Southeast Community College in the energy generation program. We're very proud to have hired seven people from this amazing program. Recently, we've committed to providing scholarships for those students during the next two academic years. Monolith would value additional opportunities to partner with our state and community colleges to ensure that students are prepared for the workforce as soon as they finish school. Currently, we proudly employ more than 150 Nebraska workers in highly paid, highly skilled clean energy jobs, and we plan to grow that number by 10 percent in the next year alone. With construction beginning soon on our latest expansion, Olive Creek 2, our companies needs for highly skilled workers will only continue to grow. The Olive Creek 2 facility will be more than \$1 billion, \$1.5 billion, actually, in capital investment and will create an additional 200 jobs. Monolith fully supports LB568. This bill is a very important bill for our state and for our future economic growth. We appreciate

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our state leadership for recognizing the opportunity before us, and we want everyone to know how much we support this bill. I thank you for allowing me the time to testify and happy to answer any questions.

MOSER: Questions? Let's take Senator Jacobson.

JACOBSON: Thank you, Vice Chair Moser. And thank you for being here. And I-- I've, I've been developing this, this reputation of being a tough questioner, which, I might add, is totally unjustified.

AMY OSTERMEYER: I welcome the questions.

JACOBSON: But I want you to know that I, I appreciate all the efforts of Monolith. Really glad you're here as a company. This is really a win-win for Nebraska. I'd also tell you when you get ready to open your plant out in North Platte in the new rail park facility, let me know and I'll help you get through the transition out there.

AMY OSTERMEYER: Absolutely.

JACOBSON: The-- but I do appreciate you testifying today and for the work that Monolith is doing. And I think it really creates tremendous opportunities for our state moving forward. And I, I really applaud what you're doing as a company. I mean, it's amazing what you're, what you're doing there. So thank you for what you're doing. Thank you for supporting the program as well.

AMY OSTERMEYER: Thank you. I appreciate your support as well.

MOSER: More questions? Senator Brandt.

BRANDT: Thank you, Vice Chair Moser. And that was from a guy who's out west and you're in my district. Thank you for being in District 32.

AMY OSTERMEYER: Of course.

BRANDT: So the \$1.5 billion and 200 jobs, does that include the anhydrous plant that will be built adjacent to OC2?

AMY OSTERMEYER: It does.

BRANDT: How much electricity are you going to use when this thing is all up and going?

AMY OSTERMEYER: Like, 300 megawatts annually.

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BRANDT: So you'll be the largest electrical user in the state, is that correct?

AMY OSTERMEYER: That is correct. When Olive Creek 2 is up and running, we will be the largest consumer of electricity in the state.

BRANDT: And then the status, what will be the completion-- anticipated completion date on OC2?

AMY OSTERMEYER: 2027. So we expect to begin construction in the beginning of 2024. It's about a three-year construction cycle. We'll start hiring through that period of time, but begin operations in 2027.

BRANDT: Do you anticipate a company like Monolith opening other sites possibly at North Platte?

AMY OSTERMEYER: We do. The-- Monolith has proprietary technology in the way that we grow as we build new plants. So that is how we'll grow. There-- we are evaluating where our next site following Olive Creek 2 will be. We're looking at other locations across the country. Nebraska certainly is not completely something that we're opposed to, but we haven't made firm decisions on our expansion plans beyond Olive Creek 2 just yet.

BRANDT: All right. Thank you for being here.

AMY OSTERMEYER: You bet.

MOSER: OK. Any other questions? Thank you very much.

AMY OSTERMEYER: Thank you.

MOSER: Other supporters? Welcome to Natural Resources.

ROSS McCONNELL: Well, thank you. Good afternoon, Vice Chairman Moser and the rest of the committee. I'm Ross McConnell. That's R-o-s-s M-c-C-o-n-n-e-l-l. I am president of DZ Atlantic, Day and Zimmerman's open shop business unit. Thank you for the opportunity to voice D&Z's support for LB568 to adopt the Nuclear and Hydrogen Development Act. This is an important contribution toward evaluating the value of skilled craft jobs among young people and their parents here in, in Nebraska. D&Z is a 120-year-old family-owned, private company that provides maintenance and construction services for 54 percent of the operating nuclear reactors in the United States. And we perform all the maintenance work for nuclear utilities that use open shop or

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nonunion labor like Cooper Nuclear Station, where we've been the contractor for 19 years. Skilled craft professionals such as carpenters, welders, pipe fitters, to name a few, are the backbone of our modern energy infrastructure. Today, demand for skilled craft jobs is skyrocketing and competition for this talent is greater than ever. Fueling this demand are tax incentives to keep existing nuclear plants competitive, an influx of government funding to build next generation energy technology like small modular reactors, infrastructure investments, competition for craft skills from other industries, including Amazon, semiconductors, EV manufacturing. The problem is that demand for the jobs is nowhere near the supply. Like a lot of contractors in our industry, 2022 was a struggle. After COVID, we are seeing a 15 to 25 percent reduction in skilled craft availability across the country. Even with all of our tools, programs, processes, partnerships, it's been difficult to secure talent for our nuclear outage work because of the behavior of transient workers seems to be changing. We're learning that regardless of labor posture, more and more skilled craft workers want to stay close to home, which is why supporting this bill is so important to the state of Nebraska. This is a critical first step in developing the story that skilled craft jobs offer good pay with meaningful work, enough opportunities for long, satisfying careers. For decades, education systems have been less focused on practical skills than craft workers provide and have further fostered our society's blue-collar bias. Let me be clear, the skilled craft labor shortage problem is now. This is not something we're facing in the future with the onset of advanced nuclear technology. Just as Nebraska is having a tough time keeping generational farming in the family, we too are losing second- and third-generation craft workers. For an example of nearly 2,500 craft workers we've hired for outages over the past ten years at Cooper, only 26 percent come from in-state. Addressing the shortage is critical to our company, it's critical to the state of Nebraska, and it's critical to America. Workforce development efforts like these proposed in this bill will build a valuable pool of skilled labor right here in Nebraska and will connect those trained residents to plentiful, good paying and flexible careers. I know workforce development partnerships succeed because D&Z has seen it firsthand through our involvement in educational partnerships with high schools, community colleges, and vocational schools to encourage students to pursue craft careers. We have worked closely with our customers for a long time to address specific workforce needs and have been successful in building regional hubs to address labor market challenges in Virginia, North and South Carolina, Arizona and the Gulf region, including Texas. We also collaborate with industry training

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organizations like EPRI, which is the Electric Power Research Institute, NCCER, the National Center for Construction Education and Research, and the National Academy for Nuclear Training e-Learning to incorporate industry-specific training into our educational partnerships and prepare workers for getting started on the job faster. We must begin challenging our community colleges, vocational schools, and even K-12 school districts to increase the profile of skilled craft workers, develop career roadmaps, and establish industry-relevant training programs. And then we must celebrate these career choices with the same support and enthusiasm we do for athletes on signing day. In starting with communi-- it starts with communicating the value of these jobs and making training readily accessible in local communities. That's why I firmly believe in supporting LB568 and I ask for your support as well. Thank you. Questions?

MOSER: Questions for our testifier? Senator Jacobson.

JACOBSON: Thank you, Vice Chair Moser. Sounds like you may be from kind of the southern edge of our state.

ROSS McCONNELL: You think? Just a little bit.

JACOBSON: You kind of sound a little more like Senator Slama, only a little bit south of her, so. So your company you're involved in, do, do you have any offices or do you anticipate doing something up here in Nebraska?

ROSS McCONNELL: To--

JACOBSON: Will you be looking at officing up here doing-- creating more presence in our state or where do you plan to?

ROSS McCONNELL: We have presence at Cooper right now, and then we have our closest is Kansas City.

JACOBSON: Gotcha.

ROSS McCONNELL: Lawrence, Kansas.

JACOBSON: And how many people do you employ here in Nebraska?

ROSS McCONNELL: In Nebraska, on and off, it runs from 28; kind of steady up to 35 or 40; during outages, can go up to 400, 450.

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JACOBSON: Not to mess up your HR department, what's the average payroll when you look at the workforce?

ROSS McCONNELL: The workforce for us is anywhere from \$25 to \$40 an hour, depending on your skill.

JACOBSON: OK. Thank you. Thank you for your testimony today.

ROSS McCONNELL: Yes, sir.

JACOBSON: Senator Hughes.

HUGHES: Thank you, Vice President [SIC] Moser. Thanks for coming in. So in your testimony, you said that you guys have worked with other partnerships with high schools in other states, I'm assuming. Will you be able to bring that expertise if we get this up and going and help with what goes on here and we can share resources and things like that, is that kind of the intent or--

ROSS McCONNELL: Yes, it's very much the intent.

HUGHES: OK. Because it--

ROSS McCONNELL: Yeah.

HUGHES: --ultimately benefits you as well, so.

ROSS McCONNELL: Oh, very much so.

HUGHES: Very good.

ROSS McCONNELL: And that is our intent to bring some of it to help with curriculum, with the schools, graduate people. We have examples of over the past several years, you know, graduating 2,500 welders, valve technicians, and all that with many community colleges. So, yes.

HUGHES: All right. Thank you.

MOSER: Senator Slama.

SLAMA: Thank you, Mr. Vice Chairman. And thank you very much, Mr. McConnell, for being here. Just for the sake of the committee who might not be familiar with the technical side of what an outage looks like on a nuclear power station, could you describe some of the roles that your crews have during a typical nuclear power plant outage like one at Cooper?

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ROSS McCONNELL: Yes, we bring in the scaffold builders to build a scaffold. We bring in the mechanics that support and assist Cooper Station employees, mechanical trades, whether they're welders, millwrights, electricians to supplement the workforce at Cooper for them to do their activities for the refueling outage.

SLAMA: All right. Thank you very much, Mr. McConnell.

MOSER: Anybody else?

ROSS McCONNELL: Oh.

HUGHES: Now, I have a curiosity. Sorry, you open that can of worms,--

MOSER: Senator Hughes.

HUGHES: --Senator Slama.

SLAMA: I do what I can.

HUGHES: On an outage like at Cooper, what-- what's the length of time, is it two months, one month?

ROSS McCONNELL: It runs--

HUGHES: I need to tour Cooper.

ROSS McCONNELL: --an average four to six weeks.

HUGHES: Four to six weeks.

ROSS McCONNELL: Four to six weeks on average.

HUGHES: OK. Thank you.

ROSS McCONNELL: Yes.

MOSER: If, if the wheels fall off, it could be a lot longer.

ROSS McCONNELL: You're correct, sir.

HUGHES: There's wheels on it? I'm just kidding.

MOSER: Well,--

HUGHES: Totally kidding.

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MOSER: --you, you might find something seriously wrong and you might have some kind of accident or something that could cause problems. That's why you got the experts there.

ROSS McCONNELL: Yeah, but we hope that this goes out and goes into other industries within Nebraska and we do other services, too, but that's just one of the main ones that we do here, so.

MOSER: Thank you. Senator Brandt.

BRANDT: Thank you, Vice Chair Moser. Thank you, Mr. McConnell. Being an expert in nuclear throughout, I would assume, the nation and the world, would that be fair?

ROSS McCONNELL: Nation for sure. Yes, sir.

BRANDT: Are there any new nuclear plants coming on board?

ROSS McCONNELL: The only two new ones are in-- the two new units at Plant Vogtle down in South Georgia.

BRANDT: And they're side by side?

ROSS McCONNELL: They're side by side.

BRANDT: When are those coming online?

ROSS McCONNELL: Supposed to in end of this year, but that's been delayed just a little bit, within the next two years.

BRANDT: What does the future look like for this industry?

ROSS McCONNELL: The future, in my opinion, the future of this industry is in advanced technologies, SMRs. That's where we're going.

BRANDT: And that would be--

ROSS McCONNELL: That's where we need to go.

BRANDT: --that would be the modular or the--

ROSS McCONNELL: Yes.

BRANDT: --micros?

ROSS McCONNELL: Yes.

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BRANDT: All right. Thank you.

ROSS McCONNELL: Um-hum.

MOSER: All right. Any other questions? Thank you very much for your--

ROSS McCONNELL: Thank you.

MOSER: --testimony. Other supporters? Welcome to Natural Resources.

JAMES CHESNUT: Good afternoon, Vice Chair Senator Moser and committee. Thank you for the opportunity for me to voice my support for LB568. I'm James Chesnut, J-a-m-e-s C-h-e-s-n-u-t, senior vice president of nuclear operations for Day & Zimmerman, where I have responsibility for all of the open shop nuclear maintenance, radiological services, and valve services across the nation. Nuclear workforce development and helping young people get interested in skilled craft work are of great importance to me. I strongly believe that getting in front of people to raise awareness of these career paths is where we need to be. Skilled craft work in the nuclear industry has been a significant piece of my growth and development. I'm a prime example of how early training and technical discipline matters and how blue-collar jobs can lead to long fulfilling careers. I got into skilled craft work as a journeyman painter and followed my dad into the nuclear industry. I grew up in Georgia on a ranch where we specialized in horses used for cattle ranching and for show. When I was 14, my dad taught me how to paint because farmers needed to repaint their equipment in the off season. When Alabama Power started construction at Farley Nuclear Plant, which is in Alabama, my dad and uncle started working there as painters and carpenters. Not long after age 18, I graduated and started working at Farley as a journeyman painter in the local union hall. Because I acquired union painting skills at such a young age, I was the youngest journeyman on the crew and had significantly more experience than the rest. I remember working at Farley and feeling that this huge construction project to provide nuclear power I was involved with was part of something great. I have never lost that feeling about nuclear energy significance. The nuclear energy, energy industry is still doing great things and is the boots-on-the-ground efforts of skilled craft and technicians who will build our modern nuclear energy infrastructure. We must not lose sight of the workforce development resources needed to raise awareness and communicate the value of this important work. My dad remained in the nuclear industry and spent a total of five years at Cooper Nuclear Station over two assignments as a site manager. After Farley, I acquired additional training, furthered my education in business and project management

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and gained experience at nuclear generating stations in maintenance, construction, engineering, and outage management. Eventually, I found my way to Arizona at the nation's largest nuclear facility, Palo Verde. As I've grown in leadership positions through the industry, I've also had the pleasure of supporting Cooper in oversight roles since 2012. My nuclear career has carried me across the country. No matter where I travel for my work, my favorite part of the job is helping young people find their way into great careers into the nuclear field. This is why I support this bill. Young people need to be aware of career paths like mine that are available to them in the nuclear energy industry. Every chance I get, I advocate for skilled craft jobs in nuclear energy because it's critical to advancing our industry and our country. I work personally with community colleges helping to design or enhance nuclear power training programs and curriculum. I'm currently active in Arizona at West-MEC, which is Western Maricopa Education Center, a career training facility for local high school students. I'm also the Day & Zimmerman representative for the supplier advisory committee with NEI, the Nuclear Energy Institute, where workforce development analysis is a critical focus of our work. With NEI, we just completed a study that identified a large gap in the available workforce between 25 and 55 years old, prime working ages. Identifying the needs is the first step, and in my experience, effective training and mentoring programs like those offered through career training colleges help prepare the next generation and adults changing their careers. Introducing people to skilled craft jobs, mentoring them through career development classes, helping them to interview with executives like me matters. Doing so sets people up to enjoy meaningful, secure careers in the nuclear industry. Knowing what I went through over my 40-year career, I have been able to use my experience in the nuclear industry to mentor many young people at my job and my community and my family and even my sons' friends. In addition to my own kids, I raised three boys who came from broken homes and introduced them to careers in nuclear maintenance, which was a game changer. Today, these young men have successful nuclear careers and families of their own. They are yet another example of how when we build relationships with young people, introduce them to career paths in nuclear and lead them to-- through proper training, it can change the trajectory of their lives and transform the communities they live in for generations. This is why you need to support LB568 and invest in nuclear workforce training and bring jobs to Nebraskans. Thank you.

MOSER: OK. Questions from the committee? Senator Slama.

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SLAMA: Thank you, Mr. Vice Chairman. And thank you very much, Mr. Chesnut, for being here. Not a question, just a comment. Thank you very much for your work supporting not only Cooper, but in encouraging young people to pursue paths in nuclear energy. Thank you.

JAMES CHESNUT: You bet.

MOSER: Senator Jacobson. No?

JACOBSON: No.

MOSER: Senator Brandt.

BRANDT: Thank you, Vice Chair Moser. Thank you, Mr. Chesnut, for your testimony. How do we incentivize these young people today to, to work in the nuclear industry?

JAMES CHESNUT: Well, I think it goes beyond the, the students themselves. I believe we start with the parents. I've sat in front of many high school parents, talked to them about the nuclear industry, convinced them how safe it is, how clean it is. And I also talk to them about the types of long-leading careers that can come from being a skilled worker. And I give them examples of, of, you know, the types of salaries that these young folks can earn once they get into journeyman-level positions. But to incentivize the kids, is get this type of work in front of them. I think getting them in front of nuclear type activities and watching them look at flow loops in these career training classes, getting them interested in simulator and how to control the equipment, I think that will energize them because I think that meets the what kids are looking forward to these days is more of that technolo-- techni-- technological approach to their business.

BRANDT: All right. Thank you.

MOSER: Senator Hughes.

HUGHES: Thank you, Vice Chair Moser. Thanks for coming in. In your experience with educating kids in these fields and stuff, is there-- are there opportunities-- I-- just coming from an education side, I think we can do even better jobs starting in our high schools and getting kids certificates out of that that, you know, and I'm all supporting for a two-year degree and four years and beyond, but are there options and availability for something that maybe through their high school they end up with some kind of certificate that would lead them into a journeyman position or do you feel like this is a little

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bit outside of high school, it needs to happen at, like, a community college level?

JAMES CHESNUT: Well, as an example, through West-MEC, the Western Maricopa Education Center, they-- we get them introduced to it in the 11th grade. And through the 11th grade and 12th grade, they are going through college level, accredited type classes and they come out with a-- with hours and a, and a certification from West-MEC that is applicable to any career they-- a skilled type career they, they take on in community college.

HUGHES: So in, in Nebraska schools we've got-- well, where I'm from the SENCAP, which is through Southeast Community, and they can get classes taken. So it would be through that that we could offer some in that field. So interesting. Great. Thanks for coming and sharing.

JAMES CHESNUT: Absolutely.

MOSER: Maybe you need to develop a video game on how to control a nuclear reactor--

SLAMA: [INAUDIBLE] together.

MOSER: --with some joysticks and flashing lights and stuff.

JAMES CHESNUT: Absolutely.

MOSER: Thank you for your testimony. Our next supporter, please. Welcome.

TOM KENT: Good afternoon, Vice Chair Moser, members of the Natural Resources Committee. My name is Tom Kent, T-o-m K-e-n-t. I'm the president and chief executive officer of Nebraska Public Power District. I have over 30 years experience in the electric utility industry. In addition, I'm a veteran of the United States Navy, having served as an instructor at the Naval Nuclear Power School, teaching courses in physics and nuclear reactor theory to enlisted and officer students. I've worked as an engineer and project manager at Cooper Nuclear Station, and I'm a graduate of the reactor technology course for utility executives through the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. I'm testifying today on behalf of the Nebraska Power Association and NPPD in support of LB568. NPPD is highly involved with exploring both small modular nuclear reactors and the hydrogen hub. NPPD is one of 21 licensed nuclear operating utilities in the United States. In addition to operating Cooper Nuclear Station, an 800 megawatt nuclear power plant in southeast Nebraska, NPPD is actively

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researching the possibility of incorporating small modular nuclear reactor technology into our generation fleet in the future. We are in the initial stages of a feasibility study of possible locations for SMRs, aided by a grant from the Nebraska Department of Economic Development. NPPD is also actively involved in the state's hydrogen hub efforts. In 2022 after the passage of LB1099, creating the Nebraska Hydrogen Hub Industry Working [SIC] Group, Governor Ricketts appointed me to one of the seats on the official working group. NPPD has taken the lead on this effort and many NPPD staff are highly involved in the hydrogen hub project. To ensure Nebraska is prepared to meet the demand for employees to fill jobs in these promising fields, industry and education institutions must work together to develop the necessary programs and curriculum to train these employees. Trained workforce is critical for the success of these exciting business opportunities. A highly skilled workforce brings numerous benefits to the state, including increased productivity and tax dollars. It may also attract other businesses to the state. This need occurs at a time when an aging workforce is retiring, already leaving a gap of experienced proficient workers. An example of the impact of the shifting, shifting demographic can be found during the last refueling outage at Cooper Nuclear Station. NPPD was unable to contract enough qualified craft's persons for the outage, requiring NPPD staff to extend the duration of the outage. This left a significant baseload power plant unavailable for longer than originally planned. This example further accentuates the critical need for a sustainable pipeline of qualified candidates for the industry. NPPD has a long working relationship with the community colleges in Nebraska. NPPD staff is involved with the electrical, electromechanical and electronic systems programs at Southeast Community College through classroom presentations to current students, as well as recruiting at career fairs. We utilize Northeast Community College, Metro Community College, and Western Nebraska Community College as resources to hire line technicians. NPPD has supported the Southeast Community College energy generation operations program since around 2010. Part of the creation of this program included meeting the Nuclear Uniform Curriculum Program criteria. Students can receive an NUCP certificate in addition to their degree if they've selected the nuclear focus area and if they achieve a final grade of 80 percent or above. The certificate is recognized across the nuclear industry and show students have put forth the effort needed to achieve a certain grade in the class and a desire to work in the nuclear field. The partnership with Southeast Community College and the other community colleges has benefited NPPD with demonstrable results and improved retention of highly retained candidates as they progress through the

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respective apprenticeship programs. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today and I'd be happy to answer any questions the committee may have.

MOSER: Questions? Senator Slama.

SLAMA: Thank you, Mr. Vice Chairman. And thank you, Mr. Kent, for being here. Could you describe what, what the feedback from the SCC program has been? Do you have a waitlist for kids applying? Is there interest that-- is there demand that exceeds availability or could we be doing more to build interest in nuclear at the high school level?

TOM KENT: That's-- there's many facets to that question.

SLAMA: I know, it's--

TOM KENT: I'll start with the last facet.

SLAMA: --many layered.

TOM KENT: And, and I, I do think that we can always be doing more to build interest in technical fields, including nuclear working in, in the new fields of clean technologies like hydrogen that Monolith is bringing to the state. And I agree with the previous testifiers and testimony that getting into the high schools and middle schools and talking to the kids and their parents at that time, letting them know the, the types of jobs that are available with the right training in the state through community colleges creates real opportunities for, for meaningful income and an ability to stay in Nebraska. And that's all good for us. So I think it's important to get into the high schools and middle schools. In terms of the program that we worked with Southeast develop, it's been a very positive effort on our, on our part. As mentioned previously, we supply one of our instructors from our nuclear instructor group in-- at Cooper Nuclear Station that works as an adjunct instructor at Southeast. We worked very closely with Southeast in building the curriculum, and it's become a resource for us to get operation's folks into our organization and a new path to help fill some of the decrease that we've seen in workforce coming from other traditional paths that, that we would hire from. And in the case of the nuclear power plant, that would be the, the Navy. The United States Navy operations over time has, has changed from where it was in the '80s and '90s when I was in the Navy and there's just a smaller fleet and less people coming through that path into the civilian workforce so programs like Southeast is a good way for us to develop a good workforce pipeline to support our needs.

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SLAMA: Absolutely, and I appreciate that and your service, Mr. Kent. I just remember growing up-- because if you go to school in Auburn, you understand how nuclear energy works, you have access to kids whose parents work at Cooper. We've got a lot of second- and third-generation Cooper employees that live in the area. And to us, it's accessible. Has there been talk-- I, I know in the wake of different security concerns and everything else going on in the world, access to the plant has been limited in some ways a little bit more than back in my day when there were safety days and the entire campus would be opened up to kids. Is there any effort on NPPD's part to not only bring nuclear to the high schools and the middle schools, but to bring the kids from southeast Nebraska or otherwise to Cooper to see it firsthand?

TOM KENT: Yes, there is and it's-- I think it's always something that we can continue to do more of. And, and you're right, you, you have to factor in some of the security issues and certainly the COVID pandemic over the last couple of years kind of impacted our ability to offer tours. But we have brought in youth organizations through various programs, where like high school students might go through a summer camp environment where they're learning about energy. We'll host them down at one of our facilities at Cooper or at Gerald Gentleman Station for tours. So we do do that. We do that with students from the community college system and we've had some engineering students from university there at times, too. So that's something that we do try and do and reinforce. We have as one of our groups within our corporate communications area, we, we have what we call energy educators and part of their role is to get out into the community and work with schools and promote the, you know, technology and programs and stuff related to our industry to help get people interested.

SLAMA: Thank you, Mr. Kent.

TOM KENT: Yeah.

MOSER: Other questions? Senator Jacobson.

JACOBSON: Thank you, Chair-- Vice Chair Moser. Mr. Kent, I-- we've-- I've enjoyed the past conversations with you, and appreciate your being here today. Can you talk to us a little bit about-- you know, obviously, in District 42, we've got the Gerald Gentleman plant, which is an incredible coal fired plant, very clean coal fired plant, I might add. We got a little bit of a small hydro plant on south edge of North Platte. And of course, you've got Lake McConaughy with the hydro plant there. But it looks like as we move into the future, if we're

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really going to have clean, reliable energy, we're going to be leaning very heavily on the nuclear side and small nuclear seems to be something that's out there. What-- can you tell us what's the timelines for us making more of a transition to nuclear? And I'm assuming as we do that, we're going to be taking advantage of the existing infrastructure and tying into probably existing plants, but probably there's some conversion or supplementing of nuclear. How do you, how do you see that rolling out?

TOM KENT: Well, I'll start by I, I completely agree as we look to the future of reliable, affordable electricity, energy needs to serve our economy in Nebraska and the economy nationally. Nuclear has to be part of that answer, especially if we think about some of the issues with reducing carbon emissions and, and other pollutants. Nuclear has a lot of advantages there so moving forward and keeping nuclear as part of that answer is really important. And I see that the nuclear industry has an opportunity to grow and meet those needs, especially as we see other sectors of our economy become more electrified, moving away from fossil fuels to more electric-driven energy. So over time as I look at it from our standpoint at NPPD, there's, there's two aspects that are really important. One is to continue to operate Cooper Nuclear station at the highest level of excellence to ensure that that plant reliably serves the people of Nebraska for many years to come. Our current license expires in January of 2034, and we'll be discussing with our board over the next year and a half or so the need to extend that license another 20 years to move-- to keep that resource as part of our mix. And we certainly believe that a diverse mix, including nuclear, is important to manage risk for our customers. As you look at nationally, small modular reactor technology was brought up previously, is, is the, I would say, at the forefront of the promising next generation of nuclear. There's also some advanced technologies that kind of blend between small modular reactors and just newer technologies, micro reactors, for example. The new technologies come in a couple of different flavors I will say. The, the small modular reactor technology that's furthest along right now in the development process is really taking the current light water reactor technology, which is what the current power plants use and scaling it down and, and then designing the reactors in a way that they're more inherently-- they don't need the pumps and motors and stuff post shutdown to cool as much as the, the current version does. So there's, there's less requirements for safety systems. There's also technologies that are basically building off of some of the work that was done decades ago, including here in Nebraska. Nebraska's the site of an atomic energy demonstration project at Hallam, which was a

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liquid sodium cooled reactor. So one of the new technologies that's being discussed today, TerraPower is the organization, they're using a, a modernized version of that same fundamental technology. So those kinds of updates of the learning from the history of the past, I think really sets this up as we move forward into the future. And I think what makes the difference in terms of being successful is that these new technologies are designed to be scalable, modular, manufactured as opposed to built on site. So they're smaller scale, you can bring the components in as modules, similar or similar to the modular technology that, that Monolith uses in their hydrogen facility. All of these things are meant to make a more predictable schedule, more predictable costs, and that's the big issue that we need to prove over the next decade or so. And so those first units that are being-- going through the licensing process right now and have been announced in places like Idaho and Wyoming, they're looking in that early 2030 time frame to be through construction, up and running, and have their licenses and it'll be crucial for our industry to see that happen in a way that we can see predictability and schedule and cost. The current units today, the Vogtle units that were mentioned earlier, that's been their biggest challenge, is they're way over budget and way beyond their original schedule.

JACOBSON: Thank you.

TOM KENT: Did I answer your question?

JACOBSON: Yes, you did.

MOSER: Senator Brandt.

BRANDT: Thank you, Vice Chair Moser. What can we as a state do to help you recruit more veterans to come work in your industry?

TOM KENT: Well, I think some of that's been done over the last couple of years. I can't remember the exact bill but I think Senator Brewer brought a bill forward that had to do with tax treatment for retiree pay for veterans, which I think is a big plus. I think we just got to continue to do things like, whether it's veterans or otherwise, just let people know Nebraska is a good place to work and it's open for business. And there's lots of ways you can do that in various policies that you establish as a Legislature. And we need to, much like we do with our children, we need to let them know that there's good jobs here in the state. Right? So some of that's advertising, outreach, talking about the opportunities in the state for high-paying jobs,

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whether it's in my organization or in an organization like Monolith or, or any of the other Nebraska-based industries.

BRANDT: All right. Thank you.

MOSER: Any other questions? Senator Hughes.

HUGHES: Thank you, Vice Chair Moser. Thanks for coming in, Mr. Kent. You had mentioned that your license for Cooper expires 2034. I'm just curious, how, where, what do you have to do to-- is that from the body here that gives you that license or how does that work?

TOM KENT: So that's a-- it's a great question. We are licensed to operate our facility by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, which is agency--

HUGHES: Federal thing?

TOM KENT: --federal agency--

HUGHES: OK.

TOM KENT: --and they issue the initial operating license for a plant, historically, was issued at 40 years. So our initial operating license was granted in 1974. And then we went through a process in the early 2000s to go through a, a license extension process. So you go through a process to show and ensure that you're meeting all the requirements to continue to operate the plant safely for an additional 20 years and you're meeting all the other requirements that go around with making federal decisions for environmental issues, etcetera. And most of the license extension effort around is, is showing that you're managing the aging of the plant effectively in a way that ensures that it can be maintained and operated safely for its entire license, which is now 60 years. So they have what they call a subsequent license renewal process that some of the plants are starting through right now and that's the process we would go through. It would be very similar, would be updating that information, the engineering analysis, the calculations, the, the maintenance programs, all those kinds of things to show that we can continue to operate that plant safely for a total of 80 years.

HUGHES: And when will you have to start down that path?

TOM KENT: We'll talk to our board about starting that process in the next year and a half or so. Our board, our board, ultimately, in terms of the, the local agency that, that signs off and says, yes, you can

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do this, that's, that's in our board of directors' responsibility. So we'll go through that process with them and they will hopefully, and I expect they will, give us the approval, but that's a decision that will be made by our board.

HUGHES: Very good. Thank you.

TOM KENT: Um-hum.

MOSER: Well, I just want to give you a, a bit of thanks for headquartering, headquartering your general office in Columbus in my district, of course. And, you know, I'm just thinking back over the years, many of my friends worked at NPPD and, you know, without NPPD there that would have been my loss not to know those people. So I, I appreciate-- and then that's-- there's the economic force that it brings to Columbus, we, we appreciate that, too, but the relationships are special. OK. Thank you--

TOM KENT: Thank you, Senator.

MOSER: --very much.

TOM KENT: Thank you.

MOSER: Um-hum. More supporters, supporters? Any else-- anybody else in support? Anybody in the opposition? Is there anyone in the neutral? OK. We received seven proponent letters. And due to the inclement weather, the deadline has been extended for online position comments so there may be additional comments added to today's hearing record as an exhibit. You're recognized to close, Senator.

BOSTELMAN: Thank you, Vice Chair Moser. First, I'd like to thank those who have traveled in. We have some folks who traveled in a little bit further south than what Senator Slama lives, and we had special weather--

HUGHES: We did have special weather and we're going to go sledding.

BOSTELMAN: --so we want to make sure they enjoyed all of Nebraska when they came here and the weather here. What you heard during the hearing was the need and the skills that are out there. And then you heard those who, who have come here and have done it before. And that's what they're talking about. They've, they've done the workforce development. They've, they've done those things and they're proven. And what we want to do with this working group is to bring those type of individuals together to build a strong workforce because we always

hear brain drain. We always hear people leaving Nebraska. What you see if you look in Mr. Chesnut's testimony on his second page, if you go down to the bottom, second line from the bottom, West-MEC, when you have some time, search that, pull it up, see what they did. They developed a program there. It's like you said, reaching into the high schools, getting young people involved, bringing people into the energy industry. That's the type of, of vision, I guess, I would have with this. Monolith has a huge need. I have met with them. I know what their needs are. They need-- they have needs right now. We have needs at Cooper right now. But if we're going to continue to grow Nebraska, these skill sets that we're going to teach-- that could be "taught" through this workforce development will go across a number of different opportunities, electrical, it could be in our agriculture, it could be an operator, it's going to be widespread that can be used in many industries and we want to bring that together. Do I have all the thoughts of what that might look like? I started out with nine until I started talking to some of the folks here and I was like, oh, you know, what's our benchmarking? Where are we at? What do we need? That's what we're going to do. We're going to develop that. We're going to put that together. We're going to have a targeted goal, targeted means, and go out and make a difference. We can utilize things that are already being done through SCC here in Nebraska or, or state colleges. We can develop, we can build upon those things working together, that's what we can do. That's what's so important about this working group to put this together, that's what's so important about LB568. Thank you for your time. Again, I want to thank everybody who came in today. It was for the record, it was very snowy, it was not a very nice day outside so thank you all for coming and I'll take any other questions you may have.

MOSER: Questions for Senator Bostelman? Thank you very much. Appreciate it. That will close our hearing on LB568. Thank you all for coming.