Nebraska's Natural Resources Districts
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Protecting Lives • Protecting Property • Protecting the Future

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January 16, 2026

TO: NARD Board, NRD Managers and Conservation Partners
FROM: Dean E. Edson, NARD Executive Director
RE: January 16 NARD Update

Governor Pillen's State of the State Address – On January 15th, Governor Pillen gave his State of the State Address, which outlined his plan to cut spending and increase government efficiency to close the projected budget shortfall.

His plan includes $277.9 million in transfers and adjustments from various cash and trust funds to offset some general fund reductions and cuts across agencies to increase government efficiency. Below are some highlights from his address:

- The result of this budget work will mean a $500 million improvement to the state's bottom line in this biennium.
- The state of Nebraska, today, has a general fund reserve of nearly $2 billion and the highest credit rating in our history.
- Later this year, the state will make transfers for additional property tax relief — and even after that we will still have over $1.3 billion in unobligated reserves.
- Adding funds to the Business Innovation Act program to kickstart new and innovative Nebraska companies.
- He urged support for Senator Jacobson's ag data privacy bill to allow Nebraska farmers and livestock producers stay in firm control of their most valuable asset—the data about what they grow, when they plant, when they fertilize, how much they irrigate, and all the other work that goes into helping to feed the world.

New Senator for District 41 - Senator Dan McKeon resigned as a state senator on Tuesday, January 13th. His resignation came just before the vote to expel him.

After a hearing on Monday, January 12th, the Executive Board of the Legislature unanimously voted to advance a resolution (LR282) to the floor expelling Sen. McKeon for a "pattern of behavior" in violation of the unicameral body's workplace harassment policies. The full Legislature was scheduled to vote on the resolution on Tuesday. Sen. McKeon made his resignation announcement during the debate on the measure before a vote was taken.

On Wednesday afternoon, January 14th, Governor Pillen announced the appointment of former Senator Fred Meyer of St. Paul, making him the first person in Nebraska history to be appointed twice to the Legislature.

Sen. Meyer previously served District 41 during the 2024 legislative session after being appointed by Gov. Jim Pillen to replace Tom Briese. Sen. Meyer had agreed to only fill out Briese's unexpired term and not run for election.

Voters in District 41 will choose a state senator at a special election this November to finish McKeon's term, which expires in January 2029. Sen. Meyer has not made an announcement whether he would run for election this time.

General File Floor Debate

LR 18CA - Constitutional amendment to require the Legislature to reimburse political subdivision. Government Committee.

The Legislature debated LR 18CA on Friday, January 16th. The constitutional amendment requires the state to reimburse political subdivisions for responsibilities imposed by the Legislature after the year 2026 or for increased levels of service required by the Legislature after the year 2026.

An amendment was offered by Senator Clements, AM1727, would clarify how the reimbursements would be made. He withdrew the amendment before a vote occurred on the motion. The amendment would have allowed reimbursements to be: (a) A specific appropriation to such political subdivision; (b) An increase in the state distribution of revenue to such political subdivision; or (c) An increase in the amount of a fee that may be retained by the political subdivision. Again, the amendment was withdrawn before a vote was taken.

After considerable debate, the measure failed to advance from General File by a 23-20-6 vote.

The Government Committee reported LR 18CA to General File on March 11, 2025, following an 8-0 committee vote. The following are the hearing notes.

The Government Committee held the hearing on LR 18CA jointly with LR 16CA on February 27, 2025.

Sen. Sanders introduced LR 18CA by noting the need to address property taxes. Citing a recent report that Nebraska property taxes are the 8th highest in nation. Nebraska has wrestled with this issue for years as the Legislature has steadily added other duties to local governments. Anytime we tell them to do something new, it comes with an expense.

Sen. Sanders discussed that if efforts to reduce the property tax burden in the state are serious, then unfunded mandates need to be part of the solution. Sen. Sanders noted the proposal has been voted out of committee to the floor twice – once in 2022 and again during the 2024 special session. The committee needs to do its part to solve the problem for Nebraska.

Sen. McKinney introduced LR 16CA on behalf of the Urban Affairs Committee, noting political subdivisions have been left to absorb financial burdens. Sen. McKinney discussed that if the state deems a new program necessary, they should fund it and reimbursements must come through direct appropriation.

Proponents

Lisa Alers, Nebraska Association of School Boards and Grand Island Public Schools, testified in support. Unfunded mandates have strained school resources. Unfunded mandates disproportionately burden smaller school districts.

Jack Moles, Nebraska Rural Community Schools Association, testified in support highlighting that it's not just unfunded mandates, but also underfunded mandates. Moles noted there are about 30 bills this year that might add local costs to districts. Often, they're small costs, but they hit the small districts especially hard.

Joe Dondlinger, City of Lincoln, testified in support noting the measure would help protect taxpayers and ensure cities could continue to provide services.

Christy Abraham, testified in support on behalf of League of Nebraska Municipalities. Abraham provided a list of unfunded mandates, noting it's not an exhaustive list. Often unfunded mandates are not bad, but the costs get placed on counties and municipalities.

David Klug, Sarpy County Commissioners, testified in support. Klug provided that $15 million, or 15%, of Sarpy County's budgeted expenditures in 2024 went to fund unfunded mandates in 2024.

Beth Bazyn Ferrell, NACO, testified in support noting that we need to recognize the link between the state and the counties, and the funding impact when something new is put in place.

NARD submitted written testimony on behalf of Nebraska's Natural Resources Districts (NRDs) to express our support to LR 16CA & 18CA.

We appreciate the two committees recognizing there is a cost shifted back to political subdivisions to implement programs approved by the legislature. What has been missing over the years is recognizing that these programs cost money to implement and they fall back on property taxes to pick up the cost.

In 2004, the Legislature passed a bill to declare the Platte River over-appropriated. This bill, LB 962, required NRDs in over appropriated areas of Nebraska, as designated by the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources, to create Integrated Management Plans (IMPs). These plans are an incremental approach aimed at achieving and sustaining a fully appropriated condition while maintaining economic viability, social and environmental health, safety, and welfare of the Basin.

The initial increment of IMPs required NRDs to offset over 18,400 ac/ft of depletions to the Platte River upstream of Chapman. To meet these requirements, NRDs were confronted with the choice of implementing potentially devastating regulations, posing a threat to local economies, or seeking alternative options for returning water to the river. NRDs were able to meet the mandates of the initial increment by pursuing studies, conjunctive management projects, irrigation retirements, and leases. However, these efforts came at a cost of more than $57 million to local NRDs which came from property taxes.

The NRDs in the over appropriated area of the Upper Platte Basin now find themselves in the middle of the required IMP's second increment which has to be in place by 2029. Not only are NRDs tasked with the costly endeavor of maintaining the actions implemented during the initial

increment, they also must implement further programs and projects to offset additional depletions that exceed those required during the 1st increment.

A recent example of the cost is a bill passed last year to implement the Nitrogen Reduction Incentive Act. This bill required a payment of at least $10 acre to farmers that reduced their nitrogen application by at least 15% or 40 pounds per acre. This bill helps address the nitrogen reduction loads that might get into groundwater. There were 1,137 applications to enroll 156,143.59 acres in the first year.

The NRDs dedicated significant staff time working with individual producers, helping them compile their data and complete the necessary information. We also worked with crop consultants, local agronomists and nitrogen technology dealers to promote the program. Many also did radio, social media posts, newspaper ads and newsletters to promote the program. This took time away from other duties and was not reimbursed. We will also have time spent on compliance checks and issuing final payments.

There is another bill introduced this year to increase funding for the program with LB 638. We are working with the sponsor of the bill and the Agriculture Committee to consider allowing a 10% administrative fee to assist with the cost of the program moving forward.

While the amount might seem small, roughly $100-125 thousand, the cost to implement and administer new programs adds up and it falls back on property taxes.

We encourage your support for the language included in LR 16CA and 18CA.

Opponents – There was no opposition and no neutral testimony.

Letters were submitted for the record by 14 proponents.

Sen. Sanders closed by reiterating it's time for the committee to advance this measure to the floor for the third time.

Committee Hearings

Upcoming Committee Hearings - Committee hearings are scheduled to begin January 20th and conclude by February 27th. Full-day floor debate will start on March 3rd and will carry through until the Legislature adjourns sine die scheduled for April 17th.

Hearings and Procedure: The following are procedures for providing hearing testimony:

In Person Public Hearing – individuals attending a public hearing in person will have an opportunity to present verbal testimony to the committee and be subject to questioning by the committee members. In-person testimony is generally limited to at least 3 minutes although the chair of each committee has discretion to modify that time limit. People verbally testifying will be listed as a testifier on the committee statement as has been the practice, and have their position included within the official committee hearing record.

Written Testimony Public Hearing – individuals can submit testimony for the public hearing record as an exhibit once a bill has been scheduled for public hearing and up until 8:00 a.m. CST on the

day of the public hearing. Comments must be verified through a confirmation returned from the email address provided by the submitter. Verification must be completed prior to the 8:00 a.m. deadline.

A copy of the rules governing public hearings, testimony and position comments can be found at**:** Nebraska Legislature - Public Input Options

The following are bills up for hearings next week.

Tuesday, January 20th, Ag Committee, Room 1023 – 1:30 PM

LB794 - Change powers and duties of the Department of Agriculture and eliminate provisions relating to the Healthy Soils Task Force and obsolete fund transfers. DeKay.

The bill proposes to change the following general powers granted to the Department of Agriculture from shall to may:

(1) encourage and promote, in every practicable manner, the interest of agriculture;

(2) promote methods of conducting the industry of agriculture with a view to increasing production and facilitating the distribution thereof at the least cost;

(3) collect and publish statistics relating to the production and marketing of agricultural products, so far as such statistical information may be of value to the agricultural and allied interests of the state, and to cooperate with the federal government in the matter of collecting and publishing such statistical information;

(4) publish and distribute the Weeds of the Great Plains book and supplemental inserts thereto, for sale and distribution to the public.

(5) inquire into the causes of contagious, infectious, and communicable diseases among domestic animals and the means for the prevention and cure of the same;

(6) execute and enforce all laws relating to matters within its jurisdiction and to adopt necessary rules and regulations for the administration and enforcement of such laws;

(7) employ special investigators who shall be appointed deputy state sheriffs by the Governor and who shall, upon qualifying for such office, possess all the powers which attach to such office, except that their powers and duties shall be restricted to the enforcement of the laws of the State of Nebraska within the jurisdiction of the Department of Agriculture;

(8) perform laboratory testing services as provided in section 81-2,293; and (9) to enforce the Foreign-owned Real Estate National Security Act.

The bill repeals the sections of statute created by LB 243 in 2019 and proposes that prior to January 1, 2027, the Department of Agriculture shall electronically submit to the Clerk of the Legislature:

(a) A copy of the comprehensive action plan submitted pursuant to section 2-404, as such section existed on January 1, 2021;

(b) A copy of the findings and recommendations reported pursuant to section 2-404, as such section existed on January 1, 2021; and

(c) A copy of the agendas, meeting minutes

Additionally, the bill proposes to strike language authorizing use of the Fertilizers and Soil Conditioners Administrative Fund to defray costs and provide budgetary support of the Healthy Soils Task Force.

Wednesday, January 21st, Natural Resources, Room 1023 – 1:30 PM

LB759 - Change provisions relating to water wells, the Department of Water, Energy, and Environment, the Perkins County Canal Project Act, and the Nebraska Litter Reduction and Recycling Fund. Brandt.

The bill makes several changes and references to the Department of Water, Energy, and Environment (DWEE).

First, the bill corrects several department title references from legacy DNR and DEE to the Department of Water, Energy, and Environment.

The bill strikes the requirement that the council annually determine percentage amounts for allocation and distribution of funds from the Nebraska Litter Reduction and Recycling fund.

The bill adds the Chief Water Officer, or his or her designated representative, as a new seat to the Water Well Standards and Contractors' Licensing Board.

Additionally, the bill clarifies Department authorities under the Perkins County Project Act. These include the authority to enter upon any property to make surveys, examinations, investigations, studies, geological soil borings, and tests and to acquire other necessary and relevant data when in contemplation of:

(i) establishing the location of the Perkins County Canal Project,
(ii) acquiring land, property, permits, and construction materials for the Perkins County Canal Project, or
(iii) performing other operations or activities incident to the Perkins County Canal Project and pursuant to the Perkins County Canal Project Act.

Entry upon any property shall not be considered to be a legal trespass and no damages shall be recoverable on that account alone. In the case of any actual or demonstrable damage to the property, the department shall pay the owner of the property the amount of the damages. Upon failure of the owner and the department to agree upon the amount of damages, the owner, in addition to any other available remedy, may file a petition.

LB761 - Create a fund and change provisions relating to water well fees, use of funds, and powers and duties of the Department of Water, Energy, and Environment. Brandt.

The bill proposes increasing the registration fee for all water wells from $40 to $200. It specifies that collected fees shall be used to cover both direct and indirect costs associated with administering the well registration program.

The bill also proposes changes to National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit fees. For large, concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs), the bill would require the Department to ensure that permit fees recover at least 40 percent of program costs from the previous fiscal year, an increase from the current 20 percent requirement.

In addition, the bill creates the Water Quality and Quantity Cash Fund. The fund would be used to pay reasonable direct and indirect costs to develop and administer programs regulating discharges under Section 402 of the federal Clean Water Act.

Beginning July 1, 2027, each application for an NPDES permit or a pretreatment permit must be accompanied by an application fee set by the Department. The fee may not exceed the amount necessary to reimburse the Department for the cost of administering the application. Applications for animal feeding operations or construction and operating permits for livestock waste control facilities shall be exempt from this application fee.

The bill also proposes that beginning July 1, 2027, the Department shall charge an annual fee to each holder of an NPDES or pretreatment permit. The annual fee may not exceed the actual cost of services provided. Permits for animal feeding operations or construction and operating permits for livestock waste control facilities shall be exempt from the annual fee.

Wednesday, January 21st, Revenue, Room 1524 – 1:30 PM

LB770 - Authorize fees for the collection of certain taxes of reclamation districts and county agricultural societies and change the distribution of the nameplate capacity tax. DeKay.

The bill proposes that county treasurers can retain one percent of all nameplate capacity tax prior to distribution to local taxing entities.

Thursday, January 22nd, Natural Resources, Room 1023 – 1:30 PM

LB823 - Change provisions relating to burning permits and the statewide open burning ban. Wordekemper.

The bill adds two requirements for the issuance of burn permits for the local fire chief of a local fire department. These include:

1) Whether the land-management burning is to be a prescribed burning or a controlled burning.
2) The approximate number of acres to be burned.

The bill adds the following definitions for burning:

a. Controlled burning means a nonbroadcast burn primarily to clean up or remove debris or vegetation from a debris pile, ditch, or other condition where the spread of fire is limited to a small area;
b. Land-management burning consists of controlled burning and prescribed burning; and
c. Prescribed burning means a form of controlled burning that includes planning for the systematic application of fire to manage vegetation on land utilized for grazing, pasture, forests, or grassland, control weeds, pests, insects, and disease, prevent wildland fires, manage watersheds, benefit wildlife, care for windbreaks, and conduct scientific research.

New Bills -- Introduction of legislative bills occurs in the first 10 working days of the session. This is the second session of the 109th Legislature, so there are carry-over bills from last year. Of the 240 carry-over bills, 66 bills are on General File, meaning lawmakers can take them up as soon as Speaker Arch schedules them. Six carry-over bills are also sitting on Select File and Final Reading.

The following are new bills of interest for the NRDs introduced this week. New bill introduction will continue through January 21st.

LR 298CA - Constitutional amendment to create requirements for the use of the Nebraska Environmental Trust Fund. Brandt.

The proposed constitutional amendment would add language to clarify the funds provided to the Nebraska Environmental Trust Fund are to be used exclusively by the Nebraska Environmental Trust.

The proposed amendment would also direct the Nebraska Environmental Trust to fund competitive awarded grants to tax-exempt entities, Nebraska political subdivisions or Nebraska State agencies.

The amendment would also require that a project proposed by a Nebraska state agency shall not be awarded a grant by the Nebraska Environmental Trust unless at least 50% of the project's funding is provided by a political subdivision, the federal government, or private donors.

LB 964 - Adopt the Nebraska Public Property Disclosure Act. Bostar.

The bill proposes to create the Nebraska Public Property Disclosure Act.

Under the act, the governing body of a political subdivision shall hold an open and public hearing prior to any sale or lease of real property owned by the political subdivision or any purchase of real property by the political subdivision. Any person may appear at the hearing and speak for or against the sale, lease, or purchase and raise any issue regarding the property.

After the public hearing, if the governing body decides to complete such sale, lease, or purchase, the governing body shall do so within two months after the date of such hearing. If such sale, lease, or purchase is not completed within such two-month period, the governing body shall hold a new hearing before proceeding with such sale, lease, or purchase.

Public notice would be required of the governing body at least ten days prior to the sale, lease, or purchase. The notice shall be in a legal newspaper published in or of general circulation in the political subdivision. The notice shall state the legal description, address, assessed value, roposed sale, lease, or purchase price, including any proposed lease term, and the name of any proposed seller, buyer, lessor, or lessee of the real property.

LB 1028 - Provide requirements for nutrient management plans and the application of livestock waste or litter. Jaurez.

The bill adds new requirements for large, concentrated animal feeding operation subject to permits from the Nebraska Department of Water, Energy, and Environment (DWEE).

First, it would require such operations to register its nutrient management plan with the department and to update its plan annually thereafter. The plan and any supporting documentation shall be made publicly available on the department's website.

Second, for any acres where livestock waste or litter is applied pursuant to the nutrient management plan, cover crops shall be planted following application unless the field has perennial cover crops. The establishment and maintenance for such cover crops shall be paid by the entity implementing the nutrient management plan.

Third, when reasonably possible, the entity implementing the nutrient management plan shall use regenerative agricultural practices which minimize tillage, establish living roots systems, armor the soil with increased plant matter build up, increase bio-diversity, integrate livestock grazing systems, and respect and restore a region's native ecosystem.

Fourth, for any acres where livestock waste or litter is applied adjacent to a running waterway pursuant to a nutrient management plan, a minimum thirty-foot perennial-grass buffer shall be established and maintained between the area of application and the waterway. The establishment and maintenance for such buffer shall be paid by the entity implementing the nutrient management plan.

Finally, the entity implementing the nutrient management plan shall also annually compensate the landowner of such buffer for production losses on such buffered acres prices as determined by the department.

LB1048 - Change and eliminate reporting requirements for certain government agencies and preparation of the state executive budget and eliminate the Small Business Advisory Council, the Suggestion Award Board, and the state employee suggestion system. Speaker Arch at the Request of Governor.

The bill merges reports required to the Governor and to legislature from state agencies under one section of statute. Additionally, the bill proposes a new report for DWEE to include:

A report designed to identify emerging trends related to energy supply, demand, and conservation and to specify the level of statewide energy need within the following sectors: (a) Agricultural; (b) commercial; (c) residential; (d) industrial; (e) transportation; (f) utilities; (g) government; and (h) any other sector that the director determines to be useful.

Reports shall include, but not be limited to:

(i) An assessment of the state's energy resources, including examination of the current energy supplies and any feasible alternative sources;

(ii) The estimated reduction in annual energy consumption resulting from various energy conservation measures;

(iii) The status of the ongoing studies of the department pursuant to Petroleum Products and Hazardous Substances Storage and Handling Act;

(iv) Recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature for administrative and legislative actions to accomplish the purposes of this section and section 81-1606; and

(v) The use of funds disbursed during the previous state fiscal year under Nebraska Energy Settlement Fund. The use of such funds shall be reported each year until the funds are completely disbursed and all contractual obligations have expired or otherwise terminated;

LB 1049 - Require the Legislative Fiscal Analyst to prepare economic impact reports for regulatory actions. Ibach.

The bill would require the Legislative Fiscal Analyst to prepare and submit an economic impact report to the appropriate standing committee of the Legislature, for any legislative bill that would require, as the result of being signed into law, regulatory action by an agency.

The economic impact report shall include a cost benefit analysis including:
(a) The estimated primary or direct benefits;
(b) The estimated cost savings or financial benefits to society;
(c) The estimated number of businesses or other entities to which the regulatory action will apply;
(d) The identity of any localities and types of businesses or other entities that will be particularly affected by the regulatory action;
(e) The estimated compliance costs for regulated entities, including costs for affected businesses, localities, or entities;
(f) The estimated impact on the use and value of private property, including additional costs related to the development of real estate for commercial or residential purposes;
(g) The estimated effect on state expenditures, including estimated administrative expenses;
(h) The estimated secondary or indirect costs; and
(i) Key assumptions and sources of uncertainty.

The bill also would require state agencies to cooperate with the Legislative Fiscal Analyst by providing any information relevant to the economic impact report.

LB 1071 - Provide, change, and eliminate provisions related to appropriations for the expenses of Nebraska State Government for the biennium ending June 30, 2027. Speaker Arch, at the request of Governor.

The bill proposes mid-biennium adjustments to appropriations for state agencies. Overall, the governor's proposals target a reduction in state spending of 0.4% in FY2025-26 and by 1.8% in FY2026-27. The Governor's budget packages propose a total of $495 million in spending cuts over the biennium. Related to natural resources, the bill proposes the following:

AGENCY NO. 11 — ATTORNEY GENERAL

Program No. 496 - Interstate Water Litigation – adjusts the FY2026-27 General Fund appropriation from $300,000 to $0; this is offset by an increase in Cash Fund appropriation from $200,000 to $500,000.

AGENCY NO. 84 — DEPARTMENT OF WATER, ENERGY, AND ENVIRONMENT

Program No. 313 - Water Sustainability Fund – Increases the Cash Fund Appropriation for FY2025-26 from $0 to $5,172,364.

Program No. 334 - Soil and Water Conservation – Decreases FY2025-26 General Fund appropriation from $10,708,426 to $9,645,854 and decreases the FY2026-27 General Fund appropriation from $10,758,426 to $10,160,854.
The General Fund appropriation shown for program 334 for FY2026-27 is reduced by $210,000 if LB 761 (water well registration fees) becomes law. The Cash Fund for program 334 for FY2026-27 is increased by $210,000 if LB 761 becomes law.

Program No. 513 - Environmental Quality – Decreases FY2025-26 General Fund appropriation from $5,593,323 to $5,250,000 and decreases FY2026-27 General Fund appropriation from $5,593,323 to $5,250,060 in FY2026-27.

The General Fund appropriation shown for program 513 for FY2026-27 is reduced by $315,000 if LB 761 (NPDES fees) becomes law. The Cash Fund appropriation shown for this program for FY2026-27 is increased by $315,000 if LB 761 becomes law.

LB 1072 - Provide for and change transfers from the Cash Reserve Fund and provide, change, and eliminate provisions relating to fees, funds, fund transfers, agency powers and duties, and various statutory programs. Speaker Arch, at the request of Governor.

As part of the Governors' overall effort to address the budget deficit, the bill modifies several cash funds and redirects interests and makes transfers to the General Fund. The proposal includes transfers totaling $192.6 million over the biennium from various cash funds into the General Fund. Related to Natural Resources, the bill proposes the following:

- Cash Fund transfers to be made to General Fund on or before June 30, 2026:
    - Niobrara Council Easement Defense Fund remaining balance within the Niobrara Council Fund.
    - Remaining balance of the Niobrara Council Fund.
    - Remaining balance from the Leaking Underground Storage Tanks Trust Fund.
    - Remaining balance from the Petroleum Products and Hazardous Substances Storage and Handling Fund.
    - $4,900,000 from the Trail Development and Maintenance Fund.
    - $5,000,000 from the Surface Water Irrigation Infrastructure Fund.
    - $1,400,000 from the Jobs and Economic Development Initiative Fund.
    - $250,000 from the Integrated Solid Waste Management Cash Fund.
    - $400,000 from the Safe Drinking Water Act Cash Fund.

- $50,700,000 from the Water Recreation Enhancement Fund.
- $2,000,000 from the Nebraska Outdoor Recreation Development Cash Fund.
- $1,000,000 from the Wildlife Conservation Fund.
- $2,000,000 from the Game and Parks Commission Capital Maintenance Fund.
- Remaining balance from the Nebraska Environmental Response Cash Fund.
- Remaining balance from the Small Watersheds Flood Control Fund.

- Cash Fund transfers to be made to General Fund on or before June 30, 2027:

  - $5,747,931 from the Perkins County Canal Project Fund.
  - $250,000 from the Safe Drinking Water Act Cash Fund.
  - Remaining balance from the Superfund Cost Share Cash Fund.
  - Remaining balance from the Nebraska Environmental Response Cash Fund.
  - $2,000,000 from the Game and Parks Commission Capital Maintenance Fund.

Additionally, the bill proposes to transfer $32,700,000 from the Nebraska Environmental Trust Fund to the Water Recreation Enhancement Fund before June 30, 2026, and $8,000,000 from the Nebraska Environmental Trust Fund to the Water Resources Cash Fund before June 30, 2027.

To carry out provisions the bill proposes to add the Water Recreation Enhancement Fund to list of funds eligible to receive transfers from the Nebraska Environmental Trust Fund.
Furthermore, the bill outright repeals the Small Watersheds Flood Control Fund.

LB 1081 - Require state agencies and political subdivisions to purchase flags made in the United States. G. Meyer.

The bill proposes that beginning January 1, 2027, a state agency or political subdivision shall not use public funds to purchase a flag of the United States or the State of Nebraska unless the flag has been one hundred percent manufactured in the United States from articles, materials, or supplies that have been grown or one hundred percent produced or manufactured in the United States.

This would not apply to the purchase of a hand-held flag or a flag with dimensions of less than eight inches wide and six inches high.

LB 1096 - Adopt the Preventing Lethal Agricultural and National Threats Act and the Critical Infrastructure Protection Act, authorize the withholding of records relating to critical water infrastructure, and provide civil and criminal penalties. Bostar At the request of the Governor.

First, the bill proposes to create the Preventing Lethal Agricultural and National Threats Act. The Act creates penalties for knowingly importing a high-risk agricultural pathogen or pest into the state or importing such with a conscious disregard of a risk that the pest could cause significant harm to crops, livestock, or ag ecosystems. An exception is provided if receiving a permit from the Department of Agriculture.

Criminal enhancements are provided if the violation involves concealment of the origin of the pest, the person acting is funded by a foreign government, or results in actual economic damage exceeding $1 million.

High-risk agricultural pathogen or pest means:

(a) Any disease or pest included in the list of diseases or pests of concern, as such list existed on January 1, 2026, established by the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service of the United States Department of Agriculture.
(b) The department may adopt and promulgate rules and regulations that designate any agent, toxin, or organism as a high-risk agricultural pathogen or pest if such agent, toxin, or organism is capable of causing significant harm to crops, livestock, or agricultural ecosystems.

Additionally, the bill proposes to create the Critical Infrastructure Protection Act with the purpose of protecting Nebraska's critical infrastructure by prohibiting foreign adversaries from accessing state critical infrastructure, assessing Nebraska's vulnerability to sanctioned communications equipment, and prohibiting the use of foreign adversary cameras and laser sensor technologies in Nebraska transportation systems.

The act defines critical infrastructure as systems and assets, whether physical or virtual, so vital to Nebraska or the US that the incapacity or destruction of such systems and assets would have a debilitating impact on state or national security, economic security, and public health.

Critical infrastructure would include gas and oil production, storage, or delivery systems; water supply, refinement, storage, or delivery systems; telecommunications networks; electrical power delivery systems; emergency services; transportation services; and personal data storage systems including cybersecurity.

The act prohibits any company or governmental entity that is constructing, repairing, operating, or accessing critical infrastructure from entering into an agreement with a foreign principal that would allow the foreign principal to directly or remotely access or control critical infrastructure.

Exceptions are made if no other reasonable option for addressing the need exists, the contract is approved by the AG, and if not entering the contract would pose a greater threat.

The act requires registration with the AG to access critical infrastructure, including paying a registration fee not to exceed $150. Owners of critical infrastructure are required to notify the AG of the proposed sale or transfer of critical infrastructure to or by a person domiciled outside the US or with any foreign adversary ownership.

The act requires that all software used in critical infrastructure located within or serving Nebraska shall not include any software produced by a company headquartered in and subject to the laws of a foreign adversary or a company under the direction or control of a foreign adversary.

The AG is required to create a public list of prohibited network-connected technologies that shall not be connected to critical infrastructure operating networks. Government entities and critical infrastructure providers are prohibited from adding any listed prohibited network-connected technology to any critical infrastructure operating network. The Act creates a civil penalty for violations of $10,000/day for failure to certify that a communications provider does not use equipment on the Covered List.

Lastly, the bill adds information that relates details of physical and cyber assets of critical water infrastructure to the list of records which may be withheld from the public by the lawful custodian of the records.

Bill, LR or CA	Description	Sponsor(s)	Priority	NARD POSITION	Committee	Hearing Date	Status	Amendments/Notes
LR 12CA	Constitutional amendment to impose a limit on ad valorem taxes for real property, provide a new method of valuing real property for tax purposes, provide certain exceptions, and eliminate conflicting constitutional provisions	Kauth	Andersen (2025)	Oppose	Revenue	2/28/2025		MO 126, 127, 128, AM 1101 - Pending
LR 16CA	Constitutional amendment to require the Legislature to reimburse political subdivisions	Urban Affairs Committee		Support	Government	2/27/2025		
LR 18CA	Constitutional amendment to require the Legislature to reimburse political subdivisions	Government Committee		Support	Government	2/27/2025	General File - Failed to advance (23-20)	AM 1727 - Withdrawm
LR 22CA	Constitutional amendment to provide the right to a clean and healthy natural environment and that the state and political subdivisions serve as trustee of the natural resources of Nebraska	Dungan		Oppose	Natural Resources	2/26/2025		
LR 27CA	Constitutional amendment to change legislative term limits to three consecutive terms	Hunt	Planning Committee (2025)	Support	Executive Board	2/27/2025		
LB 86e	Appropriate funds to the Department of Natural Resources	Dorn		Support	Appropriations	3/18/2025		
LB 145	Require the Director of Agriculture to administer a grant program relating to noxious weeds and restate intent regarding appropriations for vegetation management	Ibach		Support	Agriculture	1/28/2025		
LB 147	Change provisions relating to approval and regulation of adding fluoride to the water supply of certain political subdivisions	Hansen		Monitor	Health & Human Services	3/12/2025		
LB 163	Create the Office of Climate Action	Spivey		Monitor	Natural Resources	1/30/2025		
LB 242	Change the Property Tax Growth Limitation Act and the School District Property Tax Relief Act and change provisions relating to budget limitations, municipal occupation taxes, and property tax statements	Riepe		Monitor	Revenue	3/5/2025		Provisions Ammended into LB 647 via AM 994 - divided into AM 1202 - Adopted & Passed.
LB 309	Adopt the Safe Battery Collection and Recycling Act	Hughes		Monitor	Natural Resources	2/12/2025		Provisions Ammended into LB 36 via AM 635 - Adopted & Passed.
LB 384	Require a majority of the elected members of the governing bodies of participating political subdivisions to attend joint public hearings under the Property Tax Request Act	Storer		Monitor	Revenue	2/13/2025	General File	AM 703 - Pending
LB 393	Eliminate obsolete transfers relating to the Cash Reserve Fund	Clements	Appropriations (2025)	Monitor	Appropriations	3/12/2025		
LB 403	Create the Office of Grants and provide duties	Spivey		Monitor	Government	2/13/2025		
LB 424	Limit increases in property tax bills	Andersen		Monitor - See Policy Statement 2025-1	Revenue	2/27/2025		
LB 525	Adopt the Agricultural Data Privacy Act	Jacobson at the request of the Governor		Oppose - See Policy Statement 2025-3	Banking, Commerce and Insurance	2/3/2025		
LB 546e	Change provisions relating to proclamations for disasters, emergencies, and civil defense emergencies made by the Governor	Rountree		Support	Government	3/12/2025		
LB 565e	Provide and change requirements relating to agency guidance documents	Quick		Monitor	Government	2/12/2025		AM 239 - Pending
LB 575e	Change provisions relating to the Property Tax Request Act and property tax levy limits	Hallstrom		Oppose - See Policy Statement 2025-1	Revenue	2/20/2025		
LB 579	Prohibit charging a fee for public records requests by members of the Legislature	Cavanaugh. M		Monitor	Executive Board	2/18/2025		
LB 596	Change requirements for legal publications and notices required by law	Sanders		Support	Government	3/13/2025		
LB 607	Adopt the Environmental Stewardship of Batteries Act, the Extended Producer Responsibility Data Collection Act, and the Minimum Recycled Content Act, and change provisions relating to the Integrated Solid Waste Management Act, the Environmental Protection Act, and the Waste Reduction and Recycling Incentive Fund	Bostar		Monitor	Natural Resources	2/27/2025		
LB 638e	Change provisions of the Nitrogen Reduction Incentive Act	Ibach		Support - w/ Compensation for Admin.	Agriculture	2/25/2025		
LB 673e	Change provisions relating to the Perkins County Canal Project and provide for a transfer from the Perkins County Canal Project Fund	Raybould		Oppose	Appropriations	3/18/2025		
LB 674e	Change provisions relating to the Perkins County Canal Project and provide for a transfer from the Perkins County Canal Project Fund	Raybould		Oppose	Appropriations	3/18/2025		

LB 683	Change provisions relating to duties of county assessors regarding notification of real property assessments and eliminate and change provisions of the Property Tax Request Act	Raybould		Monitor	Revenue	3/20/2025		
LB 695	Require the Lower Elkhorn Natural Resources District to construct a dam and provide for flood control measures	Dover		Oppose	Natural Resources	3/5/2025		MO 42 - Prevailed
LB 759	Change provisions relating to water wells, the Department of Water, Energy, and Environment, the Perkins County Canal Project Act, and the Nebraska Litter Reduction and Recycling Fund	Brandt			Natural Resouces	1/21/2026		FA388 Filed - Kauth
LB 761	Create a fund and change provisions relating to water well fees, use of funds, and powers and duties of the Department of Water, Energy, and Environment	Brandt			Natural Resouces	1/21/2026		FA390 Filed - Kauth
LB 770	Authorize fees for the collection of certain taxes of reclamation districts and county agricultural societies and change the distribution of the nameplate capacity tax	DeKay			Revenue	1/21/2026		FA399 Filed - Kauth
LB 772	Eliminate provisions allowing certain transfers of funds	M. Cavanaugh			Appropriations			FA401 Filed - Kauth
LB 794	Change powers and duties of the Department of Agriculture and eliminate provisions relating to the Healthy Soils Task Force and obsolete fund transfers	DeKay			Agriculture	1/20/2026		FA423 Filed - Kauth
LB 807	Change the administration of the Noxious Weed Control Act from the Department of Agriculture to the Department of Water, Energy, and Environment and change provisions of the Noxious Weed Control Act and the Water Resources Cash Fund	Ibach			Agriculture	1/27/2026		FA436 Filed - Kauth
LB 814	Change provisions related to the valuation of agriculture land and horticulture land	Brandt			Revenue			FA443 Filed - Kauth
LB 823	Change provisions relating to burning permits and the statewide open burning ban	Wordekemper			Natural Resources	1/22/2026		FA452 Filed - Kauth
LB 827	Provide for natural resources districts to create soil and water programs	DeKay			Natural Resources			FA456 Filed - Kauth
LB 898	Change which political subdivisions may use virtual conferencing for meetings under the Open Meetings Act and change related requirements	Lonowski			Government			FA538 Filed - Kauth
LB 935	Provide for the award of costs and attorney's fees in certain actions involving political subdivisions	Bosn			Judiciary			FA594 Filed - Kauth
LB 947	Change fees under the Plant Protection and Plant Pest Act and the Pesticide Act, change, eliminate and and terminate certain funds	Agriculture Committee			Agriculture	1/27/2026		FA603 Filed - Kauth
LB 964	Adopt the Nebraska Public Property Disclosure Act	Bostar			Government			FA620 Filed - Kauth
LB 1028	Provide requirements for nutrient management plans and the application of livestock waste or litter	Jaurez			Agriculture			FA684 Filed - Kauth
LB 1048	Change and eliminate reporting requirements for certain government agencies and preparation of the state executive budget and eliminate the Small Business Advisory Council, the Suggestion Award Board, and the state employee suggestion system	Arch, at the Request of Governor			Government			FA707 Filed - Kauth
LB 1049	Require the Legislative Fiscal Analyst to prepare economic impact reports for regulatory actions	Ibach			Executive Board			FA708 Filed - Kauth
LB 1071	Provide, change, and eliminate provisions related to appropriations for the expenses of Nebraska State Government for the biennium ending June 30, 2027	Arch, at the Request of Governor			Pending Reference			FA730 Filed - Kauth
LB 1072	Provide for and change transfers from the Cash Reserve Fund and provide, change, and eliminate provisions relating to fees, funds, fund transfers, agency powers and duties, and various statutory programs	Arch, at the Request of Governor			Pending Reference			FA731 Filed - Kauth
LB 1081	Require state agencies and political subdivisions to purchase flags made in the United States	Meyer			Pending Reference			FA740 Filed - Kauth
LB 1096	Adopt the Preventing Lethal Agricultural and National Threats Act and the Critical Infrastructure Protection Act, authorize the withholding of records relating to critical water infrastructure, and provide civil and criminal penalties	Bostar at the request of the Governor			Pending Reference			FA755 Filed - Kauth
LR 292CA	Constitutional amendment to provide a new method of valuing real property for property tax purposes, provide a limit on property tax increases, provide certain exceptions, provide requirements for declared emergencies, provide for emergency bond levies, and eliminate conflicting constitutional provisions	Andersen	Anderson Priority 2026		Revenue			FA343 Filed - Andersen
LR 298CA	Constitutional amendment to create requirements for the use of the Nebraska Environmental Trust Fund	Brandt			Natural Resources			

NARD Policy Statement 2025-1 - We will work with the Legislature and Governor Pillen on reasonable property tax reform measures. We support reforms that reduce property tax reliance and provide adequate funding for both rural and urban areas. We oppose restrictions on local budgets that harm the ability of local governments: 1) To implement programs and projects to meet federal and state mandated programs; 2) Make local annual adjustments to meet the needs of the local citizens; 3) Adequately fund both rural and urban needs; and 4) Provide local funding for efficient natural resources programs that protect water quality, water quantity, soil, property and the economy.

NARD Policy Statement 2025-3 – We support with an amendment to exclude NRD data request for water quality and quantity management.