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February 8, 2024

TO: NARD Board, NRD Managers and Conservation Partners  
FROM: Dean E. Edson, NARD Executive Director  
RE: February 8 NARD Update

The Legislature continued to utilize morning debate this week to quickly work through each day's agenda. More than two dozen bills were debated on General File and advanced, including three bills tracked by NARD, LBs 147, 218, and 287, summaries of each are provided below.

The deadline for senators and committees to declare their priority bills for the session is next Thursday, February 15<sup>th</sup>. The deadline for senators to request a bill be considered as a speaker priority bill is next Wednesday, February 14<sup>th</sup>. The Speaker will designate an additional 22 speaker priority bills by February 20<sup>th</sup>. Additionally, Speaker Arch announced his intent to have a consent calendar package this session, however the criteria for eligibility is still pending.

### General File

**LB 218 - Change provisions relating to intent to appropriate money for management of vegetation within the banks or flood plain of a natural stream. Ibach.**

The Legislature advanced LB 218 to Select File this week on a 33-0-3 vote after adopting AM 2195 on a 34-0 vote. The amendment updates the date of the appropriation from FY23-24 to FY24-25. Senators also advanced the associated appropriation bill, LB 218A, on a 31-0-5 vote.

Previously, the Natural Resources Committee reported the bill to General File on March 2, 2023, following an 8-0 committee vote. The bill proposes to increase the annual funding from \$3 million to \$6 million per year for management of vegetation within the banks or flood plain of a natural stream. Such funds shall only be used to pay for activities and equipment as part of vegetation management programs that have as their primary objective improving conveyance of streamflow in natural streams.

Current law also requires that priority shall be given to grant applicants whose proposed programs are consistent with vegetation management goals, priorities, plans and policies of the Riparian Vegetation Management Task Force.

**The Agriculture Committee accepted testimony on the bill on February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023.**

Sen. Ibach opened by providing the Committee with an overview of past riparian vegetation management efforts by the legislature, including the change LB 805 (2022) made in expanding management efforts to include the floodplain. She outlined how funding for vegetation management was cut in lean years and now remains underfunded, especially given the expansion of efforts to include the floodplain.

### Proponents

John Thorburn, General Manager Tri-Basin NRD, testified in support on behalf of NARD. John also serves as the NRD representative on the Nebraska Invasive Species Council and the secretary for the Platte River Resilience Fund.

Thorburn provided background to the committee on the history of the program. Fifteen years ago, Tom Carlson, introduced LB 458 that created a structure for riparian weed management areas and provided state funds to help us fight invasive phragmites and other plants that, if left unchecked, would have clogged the channels of our state's rivers.

Nebraska's proactive stance toward controlling invasive riparian plants has paid many dividends over the years since LB 458 was enacted. The most tangible and economically valuable benefit of our work has been to increase the capacity of river channels to convey water. This was evident in several flooding events, most notably in 2019 when, in spite of extreme storms that caused sustained high flows, there was little substantial damage due to flooding along the main channels of the upper Platte and Republican Rivers.

This stood in stark contrast to floods in 2010 and 2011, when much lower flows caused the Platte to leave its banks in South-Central Nebraska for several days. It is clear to me after these events that riparian vegetation management not only benefits wildlife and natural ecosystems, it protects lives and property.

The funding provided under LB 218 will help NRDs and our weed management partners in the Platte and Republican River basins sustain our long-term efforts to protect and improve the health of our riparian ecosystems for the benefit of all Nebraskans.

Thorburn addressed committee questions about safety of chemicals, noting that chemicals are special use for aquatic habitat, and that the label is the law. He also addressed committee questions about landowner access, noting that publication and notification is always provided to landowners in advance.

Katy Torpy testified in support on behalf of the Nature Conservancy and Platte Valley Weed Council. Torpy outlined the habitat advantages of riparian vegetation management.

Jon Cannon testified in support on behalf of NACO. His testimony highlighted the partnerships that are in place between the counties and multiple local partners to leverage resources.

Todd Boller testified in support on behalf of Filmore County Weed Control. Boller highlighted the partnerships and support from local NRDs. He provided the committee with examples of success from prior efforts, noting that in past years state funding of \$5 million was leveraged to secure an additional \$25 million. Prior efforts have increased conveyance of the Republican River from 300 cfs a decade ago to 1100 cfs today.

Mike Reed testified in support on behalf of the Nebraska Weed Control Association. Reed echoed stories of success, but expressed to the committee that we need to maintain a state of management to stay ahead of the war on weeds.

Andrew Dunkley, Nebraska Farm Bureau, testified in support on behalf of the Ag Leaders Working Group. His testimony reiterated that provided by prior proponents.

John Hansen testified in support on behalf of Nebraska Farmers Union and too reiterated support provided by prior proponents.

### Opponents

There were no opponents and no neutral testimony.

**LB 287 - Prohibit creation of joint public agencies under the Joint Public Agency Act. Brewer. Government Committee Priority.**

The Legislature advanced LB 287 to Select File this week on a 44-0-2 vote after adopting the committee amendment AM 2060 on 44-0-2 vote. AM 2060 removes all original sections from LB 287 and inserts provisions from six other bills LBs 47, 269, 302, 313, 513, and 514. LB 302 and 513 are bills tracked by NARD and summaries of each are included below.

Prior to advancement on General File, Sen. Clements offered an additional amendment, AM 2343, that would have incorporated provisions of LB 390. Following a successful 25-14-6 vote adopting AM 2343, a motion to reconsider was filed and several senators expressed opposition, noting that AM 2343 would lead to a filibuster of LB 287. Following a successful 41-5-0 vote on the reconsideration motion, Sen. Clements withdrew AM 2343.

Previously, the Government Committee advanced LB 287 to General File on January 30<sup>th</sup> on an 8-0 vote after adopting committee amendment AM 2060 on an 8-0 vote.

- **LB 302 - Change provisions relating to conflicts of interest by certain officeholders and public employees. Linehan.**

Provisions of LB 302 were incorporated into LB 287 via AM 2060. This bill as amended amends the Nebraska Political Accountability and Disclosure Act. It removes a number of references to "city or village" and "city, village, or school district" and replaces them with the broader, more inclusive term "political subdivisions." The bill also provides that public employees whose annual salary and benefits exceed \$150,000 must prepare and submit a written statement disclosing certain conflicts of interest or potential conflicts. AM 2060 strikes all instances of "person holding an elective office" and changes them to "public official." The amendment also clarifies that a reference to "salary" refers to an "annual" sum.

Previously, the Government Committee reported LB 302 to General File on February 24, 2023, with AM 503 following an 8-0 committee vote.

The Government Committee accepted testimony on the original LB 302 on February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

Opening on the bill, Sen. Linehan offered an amendment that would clarify that public employees would only need to report if their salaries and benefits are over \$150,000. Her testimony included concern about a number of things in the newspaper where it looks like there's a conflict, but there's no record keeping of it. She noted there used to be more robust press, with more papers, and now it's difficult for press to follow trails, so we need to be more robust in what people disclose. She noted that it's not that you can't have a conflict, you just have to disclose it.

Proponents

Frank Daley, Executive Director, Nebraska Accountability and Disclosure Commission, testified in support of the bill. He noted that conflict of interest provisions applies to most, but not all political subdivisions. Secondly, he noted that currently they only apply to a limited number of public employees. He suggested that the amendment should clarify if a city administrator, clerk, or police chief is an official or an employee.

Opponents - There were no opponents. There was one letter of opposition submitted for the record.

Neutral

Jon Cannon, Executive Director, NACO, testified in a neutral capacity. He noted that having a clear process is important and NACO is not opposed to transparency. He noted that one concern is the struggle to attract and retain employees and the potential this may have on that.

During closing, Sen. Linehan asked the committee to work closely with Frank Daley and work to treat everyone the same.

- **LB 513 - Change proof of publication requirements for legal notices and published notice and virtual conferencing requirements under the Open Meetings Act. Brewer.**

Provisions of LB 513 were incorporated into LB 287 via AM 2060.

Previously, the Government Committee advanced the bill to General File on February 16, 2023, following an 8-0 committee vote.

The bill as amended incorporates a statewide website, to be completed in 2024, as a repository for public notices. The repository is to be established by a majority of Nebraska's newspapers.

The bill also proposes a two-step solution for situations where a newspaper fails to publish a public notice in cases of refusal, neglect or inability of the newspaper to timely publish the notice.

- 1) **Until January 1, 2025**, the public body shall (A) post such notice on its website, if available, and (B) post such notice in a conspicuous public place in such public body's jurisdiction. The public body shall keep a written record of such posting. The record of such posting shall be evidence that such posting was done as required and shall be sufficient to fulfill the requirement of publication.
- 2) **After January 1, 2025**, the public body shall (A) post such notice on its website, if available, (B) submit a post on a statewide website established and maintained as a repository for such notices by a majority of Nebraska newspapers, and (C) post in a conspicuous public place in such public body's jurisdiction.

The bill also provides two other changes for notices after January 1, 2025.

- 1) (I) Publication in a newspaper of general circulation within the public body's jurisdiction that is finalized for printing prior to the time and date of the meeting, (II) posting on such newspaper's website, if available, and (III) posting on a statewide website established and maintained as a repository for such notices by a majority of Nebraska newspapers. Such notice shall be placed in the newspaper and on the websites by the newspaper; **or**
- 2) (I) Posting to the newspaper's website, if available, and (II) a statewide website established and maintained as a repository for such notices by a majority of Nebraska newspapers if no edition of a newspaper of general circulation within the public body's jurisdiction is to be finalized for printing prior to the time and date of the meeting. Such notice shall be placed in the newspaper and on the websites by the newspaper.

Finally, the bill allows for any advisory committees of risk management pools and any advisory committee of any state entity created in response to the Opioid Prevention and Treatment Act to hold no more than one-half of its meetings by virtual conferencing.

The Government Committee accepted testimony on the original LB 513 on February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

Opening on the bill, Sen. Brewer said he brought the bill on behalf of the League of the Nebraska Municipalities. This bill expands on the progress of Sen. Flood's 2021 bill.

## Proponents

NARD presented testimony to strongly support using the websites for additional posting of upcoming meetings. All 23 NRDs have websites and have been posting meeting notices and minutes on their sites for years.

Developing a state public notice web system will help get information out to the public for meeting notices. We also support the provision in LB 513 to require the local newspapers and the Press Association to work together so we only have one contact to post online. It should not be the responsibility of the political subdivision to post in both. This can be streamlined as proposed in the bill.

One of the problems we have run into over the past several years, is the loss of local newspapers to run notices. This is a larger problem for rural areas.

An example is the Gothenburg Times, a weekly newspaper that had been in business for more than 100 years. It was the site for public notices for that community. Last spring, they made an announcement that they ceased operations immediately and there would not be any further publications. The website was taken down as well.

Not only did the political subdivisions lose out on the public notice for the next edition, but they also lost the local paper to publish notices permanently. Some had to cancel regularly scheduled meetings as the newspaper posting was not available and they would have been in violation of the Open Meetings Act. This could be an on-going problem.

There is also declining readership of a “hard copy” newspaper. The younger generation gets their news from other sources, not newspapers. This will lead to the problem outlined above of more papers shutting down. Right now, the only way we are reaching the younger generation about meeting notices is our websites and social media.

For example, recently the Lower Loup NRD had a proposed change to their water quality regulations. It cost the district just over \$30,000 to public notice the meeting in local weekly and daily newspapers circulated within the district. The district did have some complaints from some farmers that the meeting notice did not go out on Twitter.

We need to get ahead of this trend, so the public is informed of meetings.

Lynn Rex, League of Nebraska Municipalities, testified in support. The bill is a result of a negotiated agreement with Nebraska Press Association, NACO, NARD and the Nebraska Community Colleges. She spent her time reviewing the Open Meeting Act changes line by line with the committee. She outlined that the date of Jan. 1, 2024, allows the Nebraska Press Association a year to get their online platform up to host open meetings postings.

John Spatz, Nebraska Association of School Boards, testified in support. He gave a couple of real-world examples where these updates would help. If you have a meeting on Monday, you couldn't schedule the next special meeting for another week due to the timing of the newspaper. If the newspaper forgets to publish, you can't host your meeting, and this has happened to various school boards. He said their risk pool membership includes people from Scottsbluff, Chadron and Dundy County and that is a financial burden for them to drive to participate.

Elaine Menzel, Nebraska Association of County Officials, testified in support. We view 513 as a reasonable effort and appreciate the partnership with the press association to move forward with the alternatives proposed.

Robin Spady, Nebraska Municipal Power Pool and Nebraska Power Association, testified in support. She noted the bill would allow their interlocal group the Public Alliance for Community Energy (ACE) to be included in the virtual meeting process.

Kevin Edwards, Millard & Papillion Rural Fire District, testified in support. He noted the local newspaper did not print their meeting notice and they had to cancel and move their meeting, adding that alternatives would be helpful.

Opponents – There were no opponents.

Neutral

Dennis Derossett, Executive Director for the Nebraska Press Association, testified in the neutral. The Nebraska Press Association is one of the oldest associations now celebrating 150 years. He said the language they drafted was offered to deal with meeting notices of the public body and they wanted to accommodate a schedule for non-routine business items. The Press Association launched the statewide website in June 2021 and as of October 2022 all newspapers upload a public notice to their website after it appears in print. The statewide website is no cost to the government. Their intent with language is to advocate for transparency but also show our good faith intent to work with elected officials to find solutions to problems.

Four proponent letters were submitted for the record. Senator Brewer waived closing.

**LB 147 - Change procedures for property tax refunds. Kauth.**

The Legislature advanced LB 147 to Select File this week on a 31-2-12 vote.

Previously, the Revenue Committee reported the bill to General File on February 7, 2023, following an 8-0 committee vote. The bill proposes to change notice requirements with political subdivisions when refunds are due to property taxpayers.

Current law allows the county to waive notice to political subdivisions if their share of the refund is less than \$200. Under the proposal, any political subdivision whose share of the refund is \$1,000 or less, the governing body of the political subdivision may waive this notice requirement by notifying the county treasurer.

The bill also allows electronic communication of such notices.

*The Revenue Committee accepted testimony on the bill on February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023.*

Sen. Kauth opened outlining the bill that modernizes the notice process by allowing political subdivisions to waive notice of refunds of \$1,000 or less and allows county treasurers to provide notice electronically. Currently, when an entry of a non-appealable order, an unprotested determination of a county assessor, an un-appealed decision of a county board of equalization or other final action requires a political subdivision to refund taxes to a taxpayer, the county treasurer must give notice of the refund to the political subdivision of its respective share of the refund. If the refund is less than \$200, the county board can waive the notice.

Proponents

Proponents included representatives from the Nebraska Association of County Officials.

There was no opposition or neutral testimony. Sen. Kauth waived closing.

**LB 304 - Require political subdivisions to disclose membership dues and lobbying fees. Linehan.**

The Legislature advanced LB 304 to Select File this week on a 35-0-9 vote.

Previously, the Government Committee advanced LB 304 to General File on April 17, 2023, with no committee amendments.

The bill would require that political subdivisions or any other unit of local government to disclose on its website the following:

- (a) Membership dues paid annually to any association or organization, identifying each such association or organization and the dues amounts paid; and
- (b) Fees paid to any individual lobbyist or lobbying firm other than any fees paid for lobbying services that may be included in the membership dues.

For any political subdivision that does not have a website, the information shall be made available upon request to any member of the public at the office of such political subdivision.

The Government Committee accepted testimony on the bill on February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

In her opening to the bill, Senator Linehan noted that she wants to know who pays the dues for the education lobbyists. She also raised concerns about the national education associations and the stances they take on issues. She feels it would be important to know what Nebraska schools are funding various national policy issues.

Proponents

Laura Ebke, senior fellow at the Platte Institute, testified in support. All public entities need to be transparent about the dues they are paying, and to what entities, which instill confidence in the public on where local tax dollars are going. This information can be found with the Accountability and Disclosure Office, but you have to dig to find it and putting it on individual websites makes the information easier to find for the public.

Opponents

There was no opposition testimony.

Neutral

Frank Daley, executive director with the Accountability and Disclosure Office, testified in the neutral. He noted his office was unsure where this would land in statute – the Accountability and Disclosure Act or somewhere else in statute? The term “lobbying” in the Accountability and Disclosure Act only applies to lobbying in the legislature, so if the public wanted a broader sense of dues payments the language would need changed. The lobbyist registration is part of the Clerk of Legislature’s Office and not the Accountability and Disclosure Office. He recommended the committee may want to clarify what they want so it goes to the correct entity.

Three proponent letters were filed and no opponent letters.

Closing on the bill, Sen. Linehan noted she would work with the Accountability and Disclosure Office to clean up the language on the bill.

## Committee Hearings

The Appropriations committee held the hearing for the state budget bills (LB 1412 & LB 1413) on January 30<sup>th</sup>. While this was the advertised date for the hearings, hearings on the bills will continue for the next few weeks as each code agency receives a specific hearing date – this is an appropriate time for testimony on the appropriations for a respective agency. Hearings for NeDNR and NDEE have not been scheduled.

*The hearing for Agency 33 – Nebraska Game & Parks Commission was held on February 7<sup>th</sup>.*

Tim McCoy, Director NGPC, provided the committee with a summary of the agency's budget requests. These include an increase in capital funds for completing a project at North Platte hatchery and increase of \$1.5 million for an aquaculture project at Valentine hatchery. Cash fund transfer of \$10 million to state parks improvement for Fort Robinson upgrades and \$4 million for lodge and repair of Alliance district office. McCoy did express concern about how quickly they can spend funds due to permits or seasonal weather variability.

Sen. Erdman had questions about the draining of a lake structure at Fort Robinson. McCoy discussed that the dam was classified as a high hazard structure by NeDNR and the estimated \$11 million costs of dam repair would exceed available funds and consideration was made that funds would need to be used elsewhere. They are in design now for removal of dam and rehabilitation of stream at estimated cost of \$3-5 million. McCoy also addressed several questions regarding mountain lion permitting and discussed that populations are expected to be higher and the commission is exploring increasing permits.

Karl Elmshaeuser, Nebraska Environmental Trust, discussed that the NET board passed a motion to request an additional \$5 million for state aid grants due to available cash on hand. In FY23-24 requests for funds exceeded funding authority despite having the cash to fund additional projects.

***LB 872 - Prohibit acceptance of central bank digital currency by state and local governments. Clements.***

The bill prohibits a county treasurer, county official, or political subdivision official from using central bank digital currency as a method of cash payment of any tax, levy, excise, duty, custom, toll, interest, penalty, fine, license, fee, or assessment of whatever kind or nature.

Central bank digital currency is defined in the bill as a digital medium of exchange, token, or monetary unit of account issued by the United States Federal Reserve System or any analogous federal agency that is made directly available to the consumer by such federal entities. Central bank digital currency includes a digital medium of exchange, token, or monetary unit of account so issued that is processed or validated directly by such federal entities.

*The Banking Committee held the hearing on LB 872 on February 5<sup>th</sup>.*

Sen. Clements opened by providing the committee an overview of the bill and discussed that the measure is based on a policy recommendation by the national legislative council. Concerned about how a Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) could lead to invasion of privacy. Private currencies have no central ledger, unlike a CBDC, which would allow the government to see all transactions and present an opportunity for government to be able to control financial transactions. There are nine countries using CBDC to control finances and those include countries like China, Russia, and Nigeria.

*Proponents*

Dexter Schrod, Nebraska Independent Community Bankers Association, testified in support of the bill outlining the very real threat of the progression towards CBDC. The federal government is looking at it and



this bill would allow the state to push back by preventing state and political subdivisions from accepting it. A CBDC would open the door for privacy issues and also prevent lending opportunities for local banks.

Robert Hallstorm, Nebraska Bankers Association, testified in support of the bill noting this would make a clear public policy statement that the state of Nebraska does not approve adoption of CBDC by the federal reserve. A CBDC only focuses on deposit account relationships and there's no other relationships consumers would have with the bank. Takes deposits out of commercial banking industry and would take that lending ability away from local economies. A CBDC would be an invasion and infringement of personal privacy rights.

Guy Mills Jr. testified in support noting he's concerned about the impact a CBDC would have on the country and individual liberty.

Stacie Skold testified in support and discussed there are three legal fronts to oppose CBDC and outlined steps that other states are taking to limit CBDC, including steps to explore the definition of money. Nebraska should explore more of the potential roadblocks to CBDC.

Cindy Liller testified in support voicing opposition to the use of CBDC by governments.

Cathy Wilmot, Nebraska Eagle Forum, testified in support of the measure and outlined the de-banking risks of CBDC.

Opponents – There was no opposition or neutral testimony.

Position comments submitted for the record included 102 proponents and four opponents.

The committee reported no action on the measure.

**LB 1260 - Provide authority for public power and irrigation district directors to take action on certain agreements in which they have an interest. Jacobson.**

The bill proposes a director of a public power and irrigation district may have an interest in a residential lease agreement or a water service agreement with such district. Such director may participate in any discussion or vote on such agreements. No agreement of such public power and irrigation district shall be void or voidable by reason of such interest by such director.

The Natural Resources Committee held the hearing on LB 1260 on February 7<sup>th</sup>.

Sen. Jacobson opened by noting this bill addresses unique problem of three public power and irrigation districts in the state. The bill does not impact abilities of other entities to do their business. CNPPID has 12 board members and only six were able to vote on several of the measures. Individuals want representatives that understand the issues and can represent them and most qualified to serve are those that use the service. Intent is to still not allow for vote on contracts that impact individual landowner. The legislation was crafted in partnership with the Accountability and Disclosure Commission.

Proponents

Devin Brundage, General Manager CNPPID, testified in support on behalf of NWRA, NSIA, and Nebraska Power Association. Central customers look to elect other customers who understand how votes and rates impact users. A 2019 advisory opinion provided limits to how board members could vote and irrigators were prevented from voting on water service agreements and rates. Central has close to 1,000 lake leases and 1,100 water-use agreements that board members who may hold those would again be able to vote on class action measures.

Dave Rowe, CNPPID Board Chair, testified in support and discussed that leases and contracts held by board members are not unique to them and are the same as all other lease and contracts held. The bill will remedy current situation where customers are currently not represented because their elected representatives can't vote.

Tom Schwarz, CNPPID Users Association, testified in support outlining the impact of the CNPPID system on the local area. Understanding of irrigation and irrigation experience is critical for representatives. Central irrigators are currently disenfranchised and this would fix that.

John Thorburn, General Manager Tri-Basin NRD (TBNRD), submitted a letter in support on behalf of TBNRD and NARD. Tri-Basin NRD is responsible for protecting the soil and water resources of Gosper, Phelps and Kearney counties in South-Central Nebraska. He noted that CNPPID is a critical partner in the districts mission to sustain our groundwater supplies. He also pointed out their district encompasses more than 580,000 irrigated acres. Although most of these acres are irrigated by groundwater, rather than canal water, groundwater users benefit from recharge to our aquifers provided by the operation of CNPPID's canals. Furthermore, Central's facilities are critical to our ongoing efforts to capture excess flows from the Platte and divert that water for aquifer storage, rather than allowing it to flow unused to the Gulf of Mexico.

We believe that it is fundamentally unfair for Central directors who utilize canal water to be prevented from voting on irrigation water delivery rates, a problem that arose due to a ruling from the Nebraska Accountability and Disclosure Commission. For instance, this past fall, when CNPPID decided to raise irrigation rates, only one of nine directors in the three-county irrigation service area was eligible to vote. The Accountability and Disclosure ruling is also inconsistent with rules for irrigation district directors, who are allowed to vote on irrigation rates. It also removes a fundamental motivation for citizens who are irrigators to run for office at CNPPID. If you can't play a role in making decisions about irrigation rates, a principal feature of CNPPID's service to the area, why spend time running for and serving as a Central director? We thank Senator Jacobson for introducing this bill and would encourage the committee to advance the bill.

Opponents – There was no opposition testimony provided.

#### Neutral

David Hunter, Nebraska Accountability and Disclosure Commission, testified in a neutral capacity and discussed that the commission addressed this issue in a 2019 advisory opinion which had the opinion that contract holders should not vote on such contracts. Hunter expressed that this carves out an exception to conflict of interest law and does not directly impact the accountability and disclosure act.

Sen. Jacobson closed by discussing his commitment to make it clear that it's just for form agreements and not independent contracts held individually.

Position comments submitted for the record included 4 proponents. The committee reported no action on the measure.

#### **LB 1358 - Require approval of the registered voters to increase salaries of governing bodies of political subdivisions as prescribed. McDonnell.**

The bill provides that it is the intent of the Legislature that any increase in the salary of any governing body of any political subdivision which is in excess of the increase in the cost of living since the last increase in salary of such governing body plus one percent be approved by the registered voters of such political subdivision at a statewide general election before the increase can be included in the budget of the political subdivision.

The bill also provides that no governing body shall increase such salaries more than once every two fiscal years.

The bill directs the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee to prepare legislation to amend the necessary statutes affecting salaries of governing bodies, budgeting, tax levies, and elections for the various political subdivisions in order to implement the act.

*The Government Committee held the hearing on LB 1358 on February 7<sup>th</sup>.*

Sen. McDonnell opened by noting this initiative aims to ensure salary adjustments are made transparently and with direct voter oversight. Following votes by the Douglas County Board and the Omaha City Council to increase salaries, he has received several complaints. Sen. McDonnell discussed that with the exception of the Public Service Commission, elected officials are not career politicians and they are expected to hold other jobs outside of their elected duties. Believes in comparability in salaries, but those should be done transparently.

#### *Proponents*

Rick Kubat, testified in support on behalf of the Metropolitan Utilities District, CNPPID, OPPD, NPPD, and Nebraska Rural Electric Association. The current framework remains stagnant, and utility board salaries require legislative action. These are not taken up and compensation was last adjusted in 2000. When adjusted for inflation current compensation is roughly 58% less than what was provided in the early 2000s.

#### *Opponents*

Beth Bazyn-Ferrel, NACO, testified in opposition noting that county officials are already subject to several salary adjustment limitations. Counties set salary resolutions prior to January 15<sup>th</sup> so everyone knows what salary will be for following term. Already a process through which voters have input through the election of county board members. NACO has done a salary study and provided salary recommendations to county officials.

#### *Neutral*

Lynn Rex, League of Nebraska Municipalities, testified in neutral capacity and thanked Sen. McDonnell for ongoing negotiations that agree to exclude 1<sup>st</sup> class cities and villages.

In closing, Sen. McDonnell discussed that he wants to ensure boards are compensated fairly but also provide transparency.

Position comments submitted for the record included one proponent and one opponent. The committee reported no action on the measure.

**Confirmation Hearings** – The Natural Resources Committee held a confirmation hearing on February 8, 2024, for the appointment of Tracy Zink to the Nebraska Ethanol Board. Tracy is the Chair the Middle Republican NRD and the NARD Alternative Board member for the district.

The committee will release a formal recommendation for final legislative confirmation in the near future.

## Committee Hearings Scheduled Next Week

A complete outline of rules for hearings and submitting position comments also be found at: [Nebraska Legislature - Public Input Options](#)

*If you are not testifying in person at a public hearing on a bill or resolution and would like to submit written comments to be included in the official hearing record as an exhibit, you will find a link to submit your comments online on the chamber viewer page for each bill or resolution. Online submitted comments for the public hearing record as an exhibit may be submitted once a bill has been scheduled for public hearing 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.*

*In order to facilitate public input on legislation, a feature was added to the Nebraska Legislature's website for submission of written comments on pending legislation on the Legislature's website at any stage of the process. (To access this feature, search for the bill you wish to submit a statement on and click the corresponding button near the top of the bill page.) This feature will appear once a bill has been scheduled for a public hearing.*

**Tuesday, February 13<sup>th</sup>**

**Agriculture, Room 2102 - 1:30 PM**

### **LB 1368 - To adopt the Nitrogen Reduction Incentive Act. Ibach.**

The bill proposes to create the Nitrogen Reduction Incentive Act to encourage farmers to adopt efficient and sustainable practices to help Nebraska protect land and water resources and position our farmers to compete.

The bill requires that a commercial fertilizer rate reduction from historic baseline use shall be completed to qualify for the program. The purposes of the program are to:

- (a) Provide incentive payments to farmers; and
- (b) Encourage farmers to (i) reduce the use of commercial fertilizer and (ii) incorporate innovative technology into farming practices, including the proper use of biological nitrogen products.

The program would provide an annual per-acre incentive for any farmer who verifies through documentation that commercial fertilizer rates were reduced by the lesser of 25 pounds/acre for nitrogen or 15% by incorporating a qualifying product in the farmer's nutrient plans.

The department shall not award more than \$5 million in incentive payments in total per year under the nitrogen reduction incentive program.

The program would be administered by the Department of Natural Resources. The department shall adopt and promulgate rules and regulations that adopt a standard for labeled products to qualify for the nitrogen reduction incentive program and may adopt and promulgate rules and regulations to carry out the Nitrogen Reduction Incentive Act.

The department shall:

- (a) Collaborate with natural resources districts to add any new technology to the program as it becomes available. Such technology shall replace nitrogen fertilizer use and maintain farm productivity;
- (b) Identify geographically beneficial target areas while keeping the program open to all farmers in the state;

- (c) Consult with farmers and commercial entities in the agriculture industry to determine a per-acre payment rate tied to the commercial rate reduction but not less than \$10 per acre; and
- (d) Review the per-acre payment rate based on inflation or emerging technology in renewing years.

The nitrogen reduction incentive program would terminate on December 31, 2029.

**Wednesday, February 14<sup>th</sup>**

**Government, Room 1507 - 1:30 PM**

**LB 859 - Change conflict of interest provisions for certain political subdivision officers. Linehan.**

The bill proposes to expand a section of the conflict-of-interest statutes to all political subdivisions rather than just cities, villages and school districts. These conflict statutes outline when a person must abstain from voting if it may cause financial benefit or detriment to him or her, a member of his or her immediate family, or a business with which he or she is associated.

The conflict-of-interest statements would have to be filed with the person in charge of keeping public records for that political subdivision who shall enter the statement on the public records.

This section of statutes also allows for an exception as follows:

1. To the extent that the individual's participation is legally required for the action or decision to be made, or
2. If the potential conflict of interest is based on a business association and (A) such business association is an association of such political subdivisions, (B) the political subdivision is a member of such association, and (C) the business association exists only as the result of such person holding elective office.

**Thursday, February 15<sup>th</sup>**

**Government, Room 1507 - 1:30 PM**

**LB 951 - Adopt the Public Officials on Private Boards Open Meetings Act. Linehan**

The bill proposes to make private boards subject to the Open Meetings Act when they include a majority of public officials are on such board.

Under the proposal, the following definitions are used:

Covered entity means any private or quasi-public entity, whether operated on a for-profit or nonprofit basis. It does not include a public body already subject to the Open Meetings Act.

Governing board means the board of directors, supervisory committee, or other governing body of a covered entity:

- (1) That sets policy for, makes decisions for, or supervises a covered entity; and
- (2) Of which a majority of the members are public officials.

The governing board does not include a subcommittee or subunit of a governing board unless a quorum of the members of the governing board is present or unless such subcommittee or subunit is making policy or taking formal action on behalf of the governing board.

Public official is defined as any elected or appointed official of the state or a political subdivision or any government employee or official in an upper level of management, including, but not limited to, school superintendents.

### **Natural Resources, Room 1525 - 1:30 PM**

#### **LB 1184 - Adopt the Reverse Osmosis System Tax Credit Act. Bostar.**

The bill proposes to adopt the Reverse Osmosis System Tax Credit Act to provide a tax credit for installation of reverse osmosis systems for one or more of the listed chemicals. The bill also requires a real-time nitrogen management plan to be implemented by January 1, 2025.

#### **Tax Credit**

The credit would be for individuals that install systems at a primary residence for chemical that are above:

- 1) Ten parts per million for nitrate nitrogen;
- 2) Four parts per trillion for perfluorooctanoic acid or perfluorooctanesulfonic acid;
- 3) One on the Hazard Index for perfluorononanoic acid, perfluorohexanesulfonic acid, hexafluoropropylene oxide dimer acid and its ammonium salt, or perfluorobutanesulfonic acid

The refundable tax credit would be equal to fifty percent of the cost incurred by the taxpayer during the taxable year for installation of the reverse osmosis system, up to a maximum of one thousand dollars.

The Department of Revenue may adopt and promulgate rules and regulations to carry out the Reverse Osmosis System Tax Credit Act.

#### **Nitrogen Management Plan**

The bill also calls for a real-time nitrogen management plan to be in place by August 31, 2024, with full implementation by January 1, 2025.

The plan would have to be put together by the Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Environment and Energy. The plan will consider how state agencies, natural resources districts, farmers, and irrigators can obtain the necessary data to reduce fertilizer use and reuse nitrates contained in groundwater through the irrigation systems that will thereby lower input costs and reduce nitrate levels statewide.

Such plan will consider how state agencies, natural resources districts, farmers, and irrigators can obtain the necessary data to reduce fertilizer use and reuse nitrates contained in groundwater through irrigation systems that will thereby lower input costs and reduce nitrate levels statewide.

The bill proposes \$10 million for FY 2024-25 from the General Fund to the Department of Environment and Energy to fund the installation of real-time nitrate sensors in monitoring wells statewide to prioritize nitrate management and reduction.

#### **LB 1258 – To change procedures under Livestock Permits. Cavanaugh, M.**

The bill proposes that the Department of Environment and Energy shall not issue a permit to a livestock waste control facility if such facility is located where the department has determined that groundwater may become contaminated by such facility or if such operation is located within one hundred feet of a domestic water well not owned by the operation.

The department may issue a permit to an existing livestock waste control facility located within one hundred feet of a well owned by the operation based upon an evaluation of (i) well depth to groundwater, (ii) known flow direction of groundwater, (iii) the groundwater management plan and other information from the local natural resources districts pertinent to the application, and (iv) any other criteria satisfying the department that groundwater quality will not be adversely affected.

The Department may issue a new or modified National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit, issue a new or modified construction and operating permit, issue a modified operating permit, or grant a modified construction approval to an existing animal feeding operation if:

- (i) The existing animal feeding operation modifies its operation and expands its approved livestock waste control facility;
- (ii) the existing animal feeding operation's livestock waste control facility is located more than two miles from a designated cold water class A stream segment and is in the same cold water class A stream watershed as the animal feeding operation; and
- (iii) the existing animal feeding operation or livestock waste control facility is located less than two miles, but more than one mile, from a cold-water class A stream and the department determines, based on scientific information provided in the application or other available scientific information, that the proposed expansion does not pose a potential threat to the stream.

If an existing animal feeding operation or a livestock waste control facility is located within a groundwater management area, monitoring wells shall be installed to monitor possible nitrate contamination of groundwater.

Any livestock waste control facility or animal feeding operation having a permit or a construction approval is required to have routine inspections of production areas, irrigation distribution systems, and land application areas as follows:

- (i) Weekly inspections at the production area of all storm water diversion devices, runoff diversion structures, and devices channeling contaminated storm water to the facilities;
- (ii) daily inspection at the production area of water lines, including drinking water or cooling water lines;
- (iii) daily monitoring and recording of any precipitation events;
- (iv) weekly inspections at the production area of the manure, litter, and process wastewater impoundments, with such inspection record documenting the level in liquid impoundments as indicated by the depth marker;
- (v) inspection prior to each operation of the irrigation distribution system and the water source protection equipment to ensure that the system and equipment operate as intended, with such system being monitored while in use to ensure the system operates as intended;
- (vi) inspection at least once a year to determine the sludge and sediment accumulation level in liquid impoundments; and
- (vii) inspection at least once every six months of appropriately placed monitoring wells.

Facilities would be required to maintain records of the inspections for a period of five years.

The owner or operator of a large, concentrated animal feeding operation that includes a livestock waste control facility shall maintain production area and land application area records for a period of five years. A complete copy of the nutrient management plan, including the test methods used to sample and analyze manure, litter, process wastewater, monitor well results, inspection records, and soil shall be submitted no later than December 1 each year to the Department of Environment and Energy and the local natural resources district.

Bill, LR or CA	Description	Sponsor(s)	Priority	NARD POSITION	Committee	Hearing Date	Status	Amendments/Notes
LR 1CA	Constitutional amendment to require the Legislature to reimburse political subdivisions as prescribed	Blood	Blood (2023)	Support	Government	2/24/2023	General File	MO 120 - 126, AM 591 - Pending
LR 6CA	Constitutional amendment to prohibit governmental entities from imposing any taxes other than retail consumption taxes and excise taxes	Erdman		Oppose	Revenue	3/3/2023	Committee	
LR 7CA	Constitutional amendment to require the state to impose a consumption tax or an excise tax on all new goods and services and to provide a tax exemption for grocery items	Erdman		Oppose	Revenue	3/3/2023	Committee	
LB 7	Provide a statute of limitations for exposure to hazardous or toxic chemicals	Blood		Monitor	Judiciary	1/25/2023	Committee	
LB 40	Adopt the Riparian and Water Quality Practices Act	Blood		Oppose - as written.	Natural Resources	2/23/2023	Committee	AM 469 - Pending
LB 79	Adopt the Nebraska EPIC Option Consumption Tax Act	Erdman	Erdman (2023)	Oppose	Revenue	3/3/2023	Committee	MO 258 - 264, AM 314 - Pending
LB 121	Repeal the Trail Development Assistance Act	Bostelman		Monitor	Natural Resources	2/16/2023	Committee	
LB 125	Change provisions relating to the Surface Water Irrigation Infrastructure Fund	Bostelman		Support	Appropriations	3/14/2023	Committee	Provisions incorporated into LB 818 via AM 1172 - Adopted & Passed
LB 147	Change procedures for property tax refunds	Kauth		Monitor	Revenue	2/1/2023	Select File	Multiple AM/MO - Withdrawn
LB 205	Adopt the Government Neutrality in Contracting Act	von Gillern		Support	Government	2/10/2023	General File	AM 452 - 465 - Pending
LB 218	Change provisions relating to intent to appropriate money for management of vegetation within the banks or flood plain of a natural stream	Ibach		Support	Agriculture	2/7/2023	Select File	AM 2195 - Adopted
LB 241	Change provisions relating to transfers of water to another state	Briese		Monitor	Natural Resources	1/26/2023	Committee	
LB 281	Require the Department of Economic Development to provide grants for youth outdoor education camp facilities	Jacobson		Support	Natural Resources	2/15/2023	Committee	Provisions incorporated into LB 814 & LB 818 via AM 915 & AM 1172 - Adopted & Passed.
LB 287	Prohibit creation of joint public agencies under the Joint Public Agency Act	Brewer	Government (2024)	Monitor	Government	3/24/2023	Select File	AM 2060 - Adopted / AM 2343 - Withdrawn / MO 1182 - Prevalled
LB 292	Prohibit the use of eminent domain under the Jobs and Economic Development Initiative Act	Cavanaugh, M.		Monitor	Natural Resources	2/8/2023	Committee	
LB 302	Change provisions relating to conflicts of interest by certain officeholders and public employees	Linehan		Monitor	Government	2/15/2023	General File	Provisions of bill ammended into LB 287 via AM 2060 - Adopted
LB 304	Require political subdivisions to disclose membership dues and lobbying fees	Linehan		Monitor	Government	2/9/2023	Select File	
LB 312	Change provisions relating to withholding money due to noncompliance with budget limits and annual audits for certain political subdivisions	Lowe		Monitor	Government	2/9/2023	General File	
LB 322	Prohibit creation of new joint public agencies with power or authority relating to tax	Linehan		Monitor	Revenue	3/9/2023	Committee	
LB 332	Prohibit creation of new joint public agencies with power or authority relating to education	Linehan		Monitor	Education	3/21/2023	Committee	
LB 361	State legislative intent to appropriate funds for the Precision Agriculture Infrastructure Grant Program	Dorn		Support	Appropriations	3/1/2023	Committee	Provisions incorporated into LB 814 via AM 915 - Adopted & Passed
LB 394	Change provisions relating to the determination of damages as a result of eminent domain	Erdman		Oppose	Judiciary	2/23/2023	Committee	
LB 396	Provide for streamflow augmentation projects and retention of water rights	Erdman		Oppose	Natural Resources	3/1/2023	Committee	See Attorney General Opinion 23-006
LB 400	Adopt the Nebraska Pheasant Restoration Act	Brewer		Monitor	Natural Resources	2/8/2023	Committee	
LB 401	State intent regarding appropriations to the Department of Natural Resources	Dorn		Support	Appropriations	3/14/2023	Committee	



LB 506	State intent to appropriate federal funds to the Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Environment and Energy	Bostar		Support	Appropriations	3/14/2023	Committee	Provisions Ammended into LB 818 via AM 915 - Adopted & Passed.
LB 513	Change proof of publication requirements for legal notices and requirements for published notice and virtual conferencing under the Open Meetings Act	Brewer		Support	Government	2/10/2023	General File	Provisions of bill ammended into LB 287 via AM 2060 - Adopted
LB 534	Appropriate federal funds to the Department of Environment and Energy for community water systems	Slama		Support	Appropriations	3/13/2023	Committee	
LB 540	Change provisions relating to public lettings	Vargas		Monitor	Government	3/24/2023	Committee	
LB 560	State intent to seek federal funds under the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022	Blood		Support	Appropriations	3/6/2023	Committee	
LB 571	Appropriate funds to the Department of Environment and Energy to carry out the Water Well Standards and Contractors' Practice Act	Lippincott		Support	Appropriations	3/13/2023	Committee	
LB 576	Provide limitations on liability and nuisance related to land-management burning	Cavanaugh, J.		Support	Judiciary	3/3/2023	Committee	
LB 614	Appropriate funds to the Department of Agriculture	McDonnell		Support	Appropriations	2/22/2023	Committee	
LB 637	Require members of the public to be allowed to speak at each meeting subject to the Open Meetings Act	Albrecht		Monitor	Government	2/24/2023	General File	AM 616, 617 - Pending
LB 651	Provide for appropriations relating to cybersecurity improvements for state agencies and political subdivisions	McDonnell		Support	Appropriations	3/16/2023	Committee	
LB 656	Change provisions relating to the Small Watersheds Flood Control Fund	McDonnell		Support	Natural Resources	3/1/2023	Committee	
LB 672	Appropriate funds to the Department of Environment and Energy	Hansen		Support	Appropriations	3/13/2023	Committee	
LB 723	Adopt the Public Water and Natural Resources Project Contracting Act	Bostelman, At the request of the Governor		Support	Natural Resources	2/2/2023	Committee	Ammended into LB 565e via AM 1240 - Adopted & Passed
LB 729	Change provisions relating to the Jobs and Economic Development Initiative Fund	McDonnell		Monitor	Natural Resources	2/23/2023	Committee	
LB 766	Appropriate Federal Funds to the Department of Environment and Energy for reverse osmosis systems	DeKay		Support	Appropriations	3/13/2023	Committee	AM 651 - Pending
LB 768	Transfer money from the Cash Reserve Fund to the Critical Infrastructure Facilities Cash Fund	DeKay	DeKay (2023)	Support	Appropriations	3/14/2023	Committee	Provisions incorporated into LB 814 via AM 915 - Adopted & Passed - Line-Item Vetoed by Gov. Pillen
LB 817	Appropriate funds for capital construction	Arch, At the request of the Governor		Support	Appropriations	2/13/2023	Committee	Provisions incorporated into LB 814 via AM 915 - Adopted & Passed
LB 819	Change provisions relating to the Cash Reserve Fund	Arch, At the request of the Governor		Support	Appropriations	2/13/2023	Committee	Provisions incorporated into LB 818 via AM 1172 - Adopted & Passed
LB 828	Change provisions of the Nebraska Apiary Act and provide for the Pollinator Task Force, the Nebraska Apiary Registry, and immunity for certain damages relating to bees	Blood		Monitor	Agriculture	1/30/2024	Committee	
LB 831	Change provisions of the Noxious Weed Control Act and provide for control of restricted plants	Blood		Oppose	Agriculture	1/30/2024	Committee	AM 2113 - Filed
LB 859	Change conflict of interest provisions for certain political subdivision officers	Linehan		Monitor	Government	2/14/2024	Committee	
LB 868	Extend the sunset date for reimbursement for remedial action under the Petroleum Release Remedial Action Cash Fund	Bostelman		Support	Natural Resources	1/24/2024	Committee	
LB 872	Prohibit acceptance of central bank digital currency by state and local governments	Clements		Monitor	Banking	2/5/2024	Committee	
LB 880	Change requirements relating to the Land Acquisition and Source Water Loan Fund	Hughes		Monitor	Natural Resources	1/24/2024	Committee	
LB 925	Adopt the Firearm Industry Nondiscrimination Act	Aguilar		Monitor	Government	2/1/2024	Committee	
LB 951	Adopt the Public Officials on Private Boards Open Meetings Act	Linehan		Monitor	Government	2/15/2024	Committee	
LB 1018	Provide that positions of public employment shall not require a postsecondary degree and require equal consideration for non-degree-holders' wages and benefits	Holdcroft		Monitor	Government	2/2/2024	Committee	AM 2255 - Filed

LB 1080	Appropriate Federal Funds to the Department of Natural Resources	Holdcroft		Monitor	Appropriations	2/21/2024	Committee	
LB 1131	Appropriate funds to the Department of Environment and Energy for grants for tribal-owned community drinking water and sewer systems	Raybould		Monitor	Appropriations	2/2/2024	Committee	
LB 1179	Appropriate funds to the Department of Natural Resources	Wishart		Support	Appropriations	2/2/2024	Committee	
LB 1184	Adopt the Reverse Osmosis System Tax Credit Act	Bostar		Monitor	Revenue	2/15/2024	Committee	
LB 1199	Repeal provisions relating to certain administrative fees imposed by the Department of Natural Resources	Moser		Support	Natural Resources	2/1/2024	Committee	
LB 1205	Appropriate Federal Funds to the Department of Natural Resources	Hughes		Monitor	Appropriations	2/21/2024	Committee	
LB 1241	Change provisions relating to property tax levy limits	von Gillern		Oppose <sup>1</sup> - See Policy Statement	Revenue	1/31/2024	Committee	AM 2135 - Filed
LB 1242	State intent to appropriate funds to the Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska	McDonnell		Monitor	Appropriations	2/1/2024	Committee	
LB 1243	Adopt the Wildland Fire Response Act	McDonnell		Support	Government		Committee	
LB 1244	Appropriate Federal Funds to the Department of Natural Resources	McDonnell		Support	Appropriations	2/21/2024	Committee	
LB 1258	Change requirements relating to certain permits and requirements relating to livestock waste control facilities and animal feeding operations	Cavanaugh, M.		Oppose	Natural Resources	2/15/2024	Committee	
LB 1260	Provide authority for public power and irrigation district directors to take action on certain agreements in which they have an interest	Jacobson		Support	Natural Resources	2/7/2024	Committee	
LB 1277	Change provisions relating to emergency proclamations for disasters, emergencies, and civil defense emergencies made by the Governor	Wayne		Support	Government		Committee	
LB 1287	Appropriate Federal Funds to the Department of Environment and Energy for drinking water infrastructure	Ballard		Support	Appropriations	2/21/2024	Committee	
LB 1335	Change provisions of and provide duties and exemptions from the Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Act	Moser		Support	Natural Resources	2/21/2024	Committee	
LB 1357	Prohibit camping on certain property owned by political subdivisions	McDonnell		Support	Judiciary		Committee	
LB 1358	Require approval of the registered voters to increase salaries of governing bodies of political subdivisions as prescribed	McDonnell		Monitor	Government	2/7/2024	Committee	
LB 1366	Change provisions relating to the use of eminent domain	Cavanaugh, J.		Monitor (Remove NRDs)	Judiciary	2/2/2024	Committee	
LB 1368	Adopt the Nitrogen Reduction Incentive Act	Ibach		Support	Agriculture	2/13/2024	Committee	
LB 1406	Provide for an active-duty military permit for state park entry	Sanders		Support	Natural Resources	1/31/2024	Committee	
LB 1412	Provide, change, and eliminate appropriations for operation of state government, postsecondary education, state aid, capital construction, and federal funds allocated to the State of Nebraska from the federal American Rescue Plan Act of 2021	Speaker Arch, at the Request of the Governor		Monitor	Appropriations	1/30/2024	Committee	
LB 1413	Transfer and provide for the transfer of funds and create and change the use and distribution of funds	Speaker Arch, at the Request of the Governor		Monitor	Appropriations	1/30/2024	Committee	
LB 1414	Adopt the Property Tax Growth Limitation Act and change provisions relating to budget limitations	Linehan, at the Request of the Governor		Oppose <sup>1</sup> - See Policy Statement	Revenue	2/2/2024	Committee	
LB 1415	Adopt the Property Tax Relief Act and change the Nebraska Property Tax Incentive Act	Dover, At the request of the Governor		Oppose <sup>1</sup> - See Policy Statement	Revenue	2/2/2024	Committee	
LB 1417	Create, eliminate, terminate, and provide, change, eliminate, and transfer powers, duties, and membership of boards, commissions, committees, councils, task forces, panels, authorities, and departments and change and eliminate funds	Brewer, At the request of the Governor		Monitor	Government		Committee	

<sup>1</sup> NARD Policy Statement - 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.