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February 8, 2019

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

### **Floor Action**

#### **LB 302 - Merge the State Energy Office with and rename the Department of Environmental Quality. Senator Hughes at the request of the Governor.**

The Legislature advance LB 302 to Select File on February 7<sup>th</sup> by a 41-0-6 vote.

The bill proposes to merge the State Energy Office and the Department of Environmental Quality to create the Department of Environment and Energy. The Director of the Department of Environmental Quality would become the Director of Environment and Energy.

The bill also authorizes the state of Nebraska to assume the 404-permitting process. This would be pending upon agreement between the federal agencies and the state of Nebraska.

The Natural Resources Committee advanced LB 302 to General File on February 1<sup>st</sup>. The hearing was held on January 30<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Hearing Notes**

At the hearing Sen. Hughes presented initial testimony on LB 302 explaining that the bill was introduced on behalf of the Governor. According to Sen. Hughes, the bill would increase efficiency in State government by combining the Department of Environmental Quality and the Department of Energy because there are several functions that closely align including the issuance of grants to municipalities and industries.

The bill would also allow the State of Nebraska to begin the process of acquiring the Clean Water Act Section 404 Permitting program that is currently carried out by the United States Army Corps of Engineers. Finally, the bill would repeal obsolete language.

NDEQ Director Jim Macy testified in support of the bill and described how the merger would be beneficial. Director Macy has been serving as interim Director of the Department of Energy for several months. Of specific concern are the number of employees that are or will be eligible for retirement in the next 5 years. The merger would allow for cross training of employees and the combination of other duties such as human resources and information technology.

Director Macy explained to the committee that currently, NDEQ staff reviews the Section 404 Permit applications for compliance with State Water Quality Standards and having one agency complete the entire permitting process should decrease the time needed for approval. Director Macy noted that currently only

two states run the 404 Program – Michigan and New Jersey. However, in addition to Nebraska, several other are pursuing options to take over the program.

Pat O'Brien, General Manager of the Upper Niobrara White NRD testified in support of the bill on behalf the NARD. Pat explained that several projects the NRDs work on require a Section 404 Permit and over the years the cost and time to receive the permit has increased dramatically. NRDs have reported spending \$30,000-\$50,000 to receive a permit.

Proponents included former Department of Energy Director David Bracht, 4 Lanes 4 Nebraska, Nebraska Public Power District, NUCOR Steel, South Sioux City, Renewable Fuels Nebraska, American Council of Engineering Companies and KAPPA Ethanol.

There were no opponents to the bill. One individual spoke in a neutral position, cautioning senators to make sure any action taken does not harm the environment.

**LB 307 - Change provisions relating to certain Department of Environmental Quality Funds.**  
**Albrecht.**

The Legislature advanced LB 307 to Select File on February 8<sup>th</sup> by a 37-0-8 vote.

The bill proposes to make several changes to the Safe Drinking Water Act. First, the bill proposes to update statute to define the Safe Drinking Water Act as the act existed on October 23, 2018. Second, the bill extends the loan term for systems from twenty years to thirty years. The loan term would be extended from thirty years to forty years for disadvantaged communities.

The bill also makes minor changes to transfers and reserves from the Wastewater Treatment Facilities Construction Loan Fund to the Drinking Water Facilities Loan. It allows the Director to move dollars between the funds to match demand while also maintaining a minimum balance in each fund. The Director would be required to identify any such transfer in the intended use plan presented to the council for annual review and adoption.

The Natural Resources Committee advanced LB 307 to General File on February 1<sup>st</sup>. The hearing was held on January 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Hearing Notes**

At the hearing proponents of the bill included Jim Macy, Director of NDEQ. During his testimony Director Macy provided the committee an overview of the history of the two programs, highlighting the benefit of both programs to rural communities.

NARD testified in support and provided the committee a list of rural water projects managed by NRDs and the number of rural customers served by NRD rural water projects. The testimony noted that the drinking water fund continues to assist NRDs in connecting rural water users to clean potable water and providing economies of scale.

Other proponents included representatives from the Nebraska League of Municipalities and the City of South Sioux City.

There were no opponents, and no one testified in a neutral capacity. Letters of Support were submitted for the record by the City of Blair and OPPD.

## **Committee Action**

### **LB 103 - Change provisions relating to property tax requests. Linehan.**

The Revenue Committee advanced LB 103 to General File by a 7-0-1 vote with Committee Amendment (AM 116). The amendment strikes the original bill and becomes the bill.

The original bill proposed that when the annual assessment of property would result in an increase in the total property taxes levied by a political subdivision as determined using the previous year's rate of levy, such political subdivision shall reduce its levy for the current tax year so that the taxes collected are equal to or less than the previous year.

If the political subdivision would need to exceed that amount, the bill would require notice of a public hearing at least thirty days prior in at least one newspaper of general circulation. The notice must be at least the size of one-eighth page of a standard size or tabloid size newspaper, and the headline no smaller than eighteen-point font. The bill would require standard form for the notice and require the following information to be included:

- The total percentage increase in assessed property valuation of the subdivision.
- The lowered tax rate needed to offset the increased valuation.
- The tax rate increase (Difference between the lowered rate and requested levy rate).
- Proposed total budget increase.
- Location of the public hearing.

### **Committee Amendment - AM 116**

The amendment would require the property taxes collected to be no more than the previous year and would require the county board of equalization to adjust the rates when valuations have changed to assure the taxes collected are not more than the previous year.

If the governing body of a political subdivision seeks to set its property tax request at an amount that exceeds its property tax request in the prior year, it may do so after holding a public hearing and by passing a resolution or ordinance after the hearing.

A public notice would be required to be published in a newspaper of general circulation in the area of the political subdivision at least five days prior to the hearing.

The hearing notice shall contain the following information:

- Certified taxable value for the prior year
- Certified taxable value for the current year
- Percentage increase or decrease in the certified taxable value
- Dollar amount of prior year's tax request
- Property tax rate of prior year
- Property tax rate to fund prior year's tax request with current year's certified taxable value
- Proposed dollar amount of tax request for the current year
- Property tax rate necessary to fund the request
- Percentage increase or decrease in the property tax rate from the prior year to the current year
- Percentage increase or decrease in the total operating budget from the prior year to the current year

The resolution or ordinance shall include, but not be limited to the following information:

- Name of political subdivision
- Amount of property tax request
- The percentage difference in the total assessed value
- The property tax rate to fund prior year's tax request with current year's certified taxable value
- The tax rate that will fund the proposed property tax request
- The percentage increase or decrease in the total operating budget
- The record vote of the governing body

The resolution or ordinance shall be filed with the county clerk on or before October 13 of the year applicable to the property tax request.

### **Hearing Notes**

The bill was supported by the Platte Institute, Lincoln Independent Business Association and one individual. The main argument was that residential property values are increasing in Lincoln and Omaha and something needs to be done to control increased property taxes on urban property.

Opponents Kyle McGowen, registered lobbyist for the Nebraska Council of School Administrators, testified in opposition for his organization and five other school and education groups. McGowen mentioned that many of the concepts included in the bill are already in existing budget laws. This would make the local boards go through the budget hearing process twice. He also pointed out the bill has some issues with timing on notices and conflicts with current public notice requirements.

County assessors are not required to have property valuation information to political subdivisions until August 20<sup>th</sup> of each year. Budgets must be submitted to the State auditor by September 20<sup>th</sup> which is 31 days later. The bill requires that you notice the hearing "at least" 30 days in advance of the special hearing and most newspapers require a minimum of 5 to 7 days advance notice to publish. The timing under the bill does not allow time to hold the hearing and get your budget submitted to the state by the deadline.

Steve Curtiss, City of Omaha. Assessment valuation adjustments are not consistent with all of the counties. Some are at 95% and some are at 85%. This would maintain inequities in the system.

Gregg Adams with the Nebraska Community Colleges also brought up the timing issue.

Lynn Rex, League of Municipalities, pointed out that state aid and tax base has been taken away from local governments in the past, creating the increased cost of local government. Rex also mentioned problems for smaller cities to publish the notice in the newspapers, especially those that only have weekly publications. It also doubles the costs of notices because of the first public notice.

Other political subdivisions brought up similar concerns in opposition testimony.

### **Hearings summaries this week -- The following bills had hearings this week.**

#### **LB 128 - Provide for Wildlife Conservation Plates. Hughes.**

The Transportation Committee accepted testimony on LB 128 on Tuesday, February 5<sup>th</sup>.

The bill proposes to allow for the creation of a Wildlife Conservation license plate to fund the Game and Parks Commission Education Fund. There would be an additional \$40 fee for the plate with 25% going to the Department of Motor Vehicles and 75% going to the Game and Parks Commission Educational Fund.

### **Hearing Notes**

Tim McCoy, Nebraska Game and Park Commission, presented testimony in support of the measure. McCoy explained the funds can be used to leverage other funds to provide conservation education in school age children. Some of the programs supported are Project Wild, Trout in the Classroom, and the Outdoor Educators.

McCoy explained that three plates are proposed – Sandhill Cranes, Big Horn Sheep and Cut-Throat Trout

Jim Johnson, Nebraska Wildlife Federation, supported the bill but offered two suggestions. First, the proceeds should be put in the Wildlife Conservation Fund rather than education. Second, he suggested the plates use different species such as pronghorn sheep and sunfish.

Marjorie Kennedy, Wachiska Chapter of the National Audubon Society, supported the bill and suggested directing the funds toward the Wildlife Conservation Fund rather than education.

Other letters of support were filed at the hearing from other individuals.

No action has been reported by the committee.

### **LB 148 - Change requirements for public hearings on proposed budget statements and notices of meetings of public bodies. Groene.**

The Government Committee accepted testimony on LB 148 on Wednesday, February 6<sup>th</sup>.

The bill proposes to change provisions relating to budgeting of a joint entity created pursuant to the Interlocal Cooperation Act that receives funds from an occupation tax on irrigated acres.

The proposal would require that the public hearing on a proposed budget statement be held separately from any regularly scheduled meeting of the governing body and not be limited by time. The bill adds that the governing body be required to make a detailed presentation of the proposed budget statement and make at least three copies of the proposed budget statement available to the public. Any member of the public desiring to speak on the proposed budget statement would be allowed to address the governing body and must be given a reasonable amount of time to speak.

The bill also changes the publicized notice requirements. It would require notice to be published in a newspaper of general circulation within the public body's jurisdiction and, if available, in a digital advertisement on such newspaper's web site. Each public body would be required to record the methods and dates of such notice in its minutes.

### **Hearing Notes**

In his opening Sen. Groene noted this legislation is targeting NCORPE claiming the entity spends over \$11 million and there is no budget for that much spending. He also noted that the bill is requiring a separate hearing be held and that it not be limited by time, telling the committee this was added because he's been to a school board meeting where the budget hearing was shut off.

Proponents of the bill included Ken Anderson, a resident from Lincoln County Nebraska testifying on behalf of himself. He asked why this large of an entity can be created without having a public budget hearing. He told the committee he's asked for public records and budget information, but NCORPE failed to provide him with information requested. When asked by committee members, he did admit he has been provided copies of the records and budget information he requested.

Dan Estermann also testified as a proponent. He noted he is a director of the Middle Republican NRD but representing only himself. He told the committee that NCORPE by-laws require a budget, but budgets have not been prepared to the satisfaction of some directors. He also told the committee that board members don't have the best skill sets or time to serve on an interlocal board.

Opponents included Todd Siel, General Manager Lower Republican NRD, testifying on behalf of LRNRD and the Nebraska Association of Resources Districts. He corrected the statements made by previous testifiers about the NCORPE expenditures of \$11 million. The expenditures mentioned include the bond repayments, but they are paid by the local districts through their local budgets -- not NCORPE. Also, NCORPE does not have taxing authority. Rather, it is the individual bodies who are members of these joint entities which have taxing authority.

Siel noted all natural resources districts have a transparent budget process and take that seriously. The districts already generally follow the processes that are laid out in this bill. Budget hearings are held separately from regular meeting. For the sake of efficiency, it is usually held immediately prior to a regular meeting, but it is its own meeting that follows the provisions laid out under the bill. It is not time-limited. The public is given notice. Budget information is presented. Any member of the public is given the opportunity to provide comment.

Siel outlined the process used by the Lower Republican NRD, which is similar to the other three districts that are included with NCORPE and is followed each year. During the budgeting process, they task the board appointed representatives of each joint entity to monitor and assist in the formulation of a draft budget. When approved by these representatives, they then bring it back to the NRD Board of Directors for a vote to either approve or disapprove of the draft budget. These joint entities of the Lower Republican NRD are NOT free-standing bodies with taxing authority. Rather, they ultimately answer to the full Board of Directors of our NRD.

Seil raised concerns related to requirements applicable to any joint entity created pursuant to the Interlocal Cooperation Act that receives occupation tax funds. The Lower Republican NRD is a party to nine interlocal agreements, including NCORPE. Siel noted again these joint entities do not have the authority, by themselves, to levy taxes. It is the member entities that do and that is included in the local entities budgets.

For example, Siel pointed out his district has an interlocal agreement with the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources on the Integrated Management Plan (IMP), similar to most all the other local NRDs. Occupation taxes come into play when implementing the IMP. We are uncertain whether our district and the Department would have to hold a joint public hearing under this proposal.

Finally, Siel expressed concerns about the public notice requirements in the proposed bill. The districts do follow current law, providing reasonable advance publicized notice of the time and place of each meeting and recorded in their minutes. This process has worked well for the constituents of the NRD.

The new language requiring notice publication "in a newspaper of general circulation within the public body's jurisdiction" would be difficult for the Lower Republican NRD to meet, as there is not one newspaper of general circulation that reaches the entirety of the NRD's jurisdiction. The distribution of the larger newspapers in south central Nebraska has diminished greatly over the last few years. As such, the district has relied much more on local weekly papers and the district website as a means of providing district-wide communication and notices.

Other opponents include Lynn Rex who testified on behalf of the Nebraska League of Municipalities and the Nebraska Association of School Boards. Her testimony expressed concern over what constitutes a detailed presentation and asked that the committee provide clarification.

Jack Cheloha also testified in opposition on behalf of the City of Omaha. His testimony expressed concern over the requirement of a detailed presentation.

Neutral testimony was provided by NACO.

Letters of support were provided by the American Civil Liberties Union, Media of Nebraska and a couple of individuals. Letters of opposition were submitted by the Upper Republican NRD and the City of Stromsberg.

No action has been reported by the committee.

**LB 319 - Change provisions relating to notices, rules, and regulations of Department of Natural Resources. Moser.**

The Natural Resources Committee accepted testimony on LB 319 on Wednesday, February 6<sup>th</sup>.

The bill proposes to eliminate mail as the only method of providing notification of any hearing to consider the adoption, amendment, or repeal of minimum standards for local flood plain management regulation to clerks of all cities, villages, and counties which might be affected.

The bill also proposes to eliminate the requirement for the Department to adopt and promulgate rules and regulations governing matters coming before it and makes it permissive to do such.

**Hearing Notes**

Jeff Fassett, Director of the Department of Natural Resources, testified in support of the bill. He noted that the proposed changes were identified by working with customers to improve efficiencies.

Fassett told the committee there was no negative feedback from parties regarding the proposed switch from mail to email to provide cost savings. He noted the proposed eliminating mandatory rules removes the restriction for the use of the Water Resources Trust Fund. It was outlined that statute allows for a broad authority, however current department rules limit the scope of use for the fund. He told the committee that the fund is not receiving new dollars, but currently has \$167,000 available. Modifying the rule would allow the funds to be better used in the fully and over-appropriated areas. He noted it also would eliminate some confusion related to the 2000 merger of the Department of Water Resources and the Natural Resources Commission.

There were no opponents or neutral testimony to the bill.

No action has been reported by the committee.

**LB 412 - Require an election regarding creation of a joint public agency. Geist.**

The Government Committee accepted testimony on LB 412 on Thursday, February 7<sup>th</sup>.

The bill would require a vote of the registered voters of political subdivisions before a joint public agency could be created.

The vote would have to be at the primary or general election. The political subdivisions would be prohibited from entering into an agreement until after the voters of each political subdivision have approved the creation of the joint public agency.

### Hearing Notes

Coby Mach, Lincoln Independent Business Association (LIBA), testified in support of the bill. He noted there are seven JPAs in Nebraska and three of them are in Lincoln. He claimed they create a bureaucracy and additional taxing authority that voters have no recourse on.

Mach expressed the groups opposition to the JPAs that created the Haymarket, Pinnacle Bank Arena and the Lincoln/Lancaster County Corrections Facility

Mach pointed out last year the City of Lincoln and Lincoln Public Schools (LPS) attempted to create another JPA to provide additional security for the schools. The parties decided not to do it after opposition from LIBA and others. At the suggestion of the opponents, the city and LPS decided to enter into an interlocal agreement and spend \$2 million from existing funds on school security.

Mach argued that if political subdivisions wants to create a new political entity with taxing authority, the local voters should be the ones that decides that. Not the local subdivisions involved.

Charlotte Ralston, on behalf of taxpaying citizens in Lincoln testified in support of the bill, also expressed opposition to the JPAs created in Lincoln. She argued the voters rejected a bond offered by Lancaster County to build a new county jail. The city and county then created the JPA to do the project together. She claimed the voters should have approved the joint entity.

Nicole Fox, Platte Institute, testified in support claiming more voter participation and transparency is needed in government.

Jessica Shelburn, Americans for Prosperity NE, supported the bill echoing the same points brought up by previous testifiers.

Opponents included Lincoln Mayor Chris Beutler. He pointed out the creation of JPA laws were to encourage cooperation with political subdivisions and to save costs. The West Haymarket JPA was created because not one of the entities involved could develop Pinnacle Bank Area and the Haymarket on their own. However, working together the community was able to get a major project completed that all can use.

He also summarized the Lincoln - Lancaster County Corrections or County/City Jail. Both entities needed to make improvements to meet the minimum standards set by the state. By working together, a new facility was constructed that serves both the city and the county and it saved the taxpayers money.

He noted the JPA's are very transparent and have public meetings and notices. The meetings are also aired on the local public access channel. Theoretically, more public involvement is better. However, the path this bill is leading toward is direct democracy by requiring a public vote on everything. It raises a question of whether we should elect local officials to make decisions.

Lynn Rex, League of Municipalities, also testified in opposition. Rex reminded the committee that back in 1996, the Legislature established very severe limits on local governments spending. Local villages and cities went from \$1.05 maximum levy to 45 cents in two years. She also noted the laws were changed to encourage local governments to cooperate through interlocal agreements and joint public agencies.

She noted there are only seven JPAs in Nebraska, which is small in comparison of the total number of political subdivisions in Nebraska. There are a lot of restrictions placed on JPAs and the projects built under JPAs have been very beneficial to the communities.

Beth Ferrall, NACO, also provided opposition testimony noting the same points brought up by Mayor Beutler and Lynn Rex.



In her closing, Senator Geist noted JPAs aren't bad and have been positive for the community. However, she expressed the need to have the voters decide whether they want to create them.

No action was reported by the committee.

### **LB 150 - Change provisions relating to access to public records and provide for fees. Brewer.**

The Government Committee accepted testimony on LB 150 on Friday, February 8th.

The bill proposes to change provisions relating to access to and fees for public records requests for non-residents. The bill would allow a charge to non-residents for the existing salary or pay obligation to the public officers or employees, including a charge for the services of an attorney to review the requested public records.

The bill defines resident as a person domiciled in this state and includes news media without regard to domicile.

### **Hearing Notes**

In his opening, Senator Brewer noted this bill was brought forth by the League of Municipalities after several years of public request by several out-of-state companies on many cities and villages requesting information on vendors and suppliers. The company then sells the data to the private sector. This has become a big burden on many cities and villages across the state.

Bob Hilske, Manager of the Nemaha NRD, testified in support on behalf of the Nemaha NRD and the Nebraska Association of Resources Districts.

Hilske pointed out that over the past three years, the Nemaha and several other NRDs have been getting time consuming requests from out-of-state companies asking for public records that are not used for tracking or participating in the NRD process. Instead they are obtained to benefit their business operation. The requests are for vendor records associated with the materials and supplies districts purchase.

They also request that the information be provided in a specific electronic format, so it can easily be downloaded into their computer system. The districts did provide the records as requested. However, it takes the staff about four hours to format the information and eliminate records outside of the request which included personal and Social Security information associated with payments made to private individuals.

Ervin Portis, Plattsmouth City Administrator, testified in support pointing out the out-of-state companies are requesting the information technology vendors, contracts and service records. The data is then sold to the private sector.

Christy Abraham testified in support for the League of Municipalities. She noted they have been working with Media of Nebraska to draft the bill which addressed many of their concerns. She also pointed out that the State of Virginia passed a law to prohibit public records requests from out-of-state entities and the law has been upheld by the courts. The proposal in LB 150, does not go that far as it still allows for the request, but allow the political subdivisions to recover some of the cost of providing the information.

John Cannon, testified in support on behalf of the Nebraska Association of County Officials. He noted the existing Nebraska Attorney General Opinion outlines reasonable cost.

Other testifying in support included: Trevor Jones, Nebraska Historical Society; Joe Kohut, Sarpy County; Jack Cheloha, the City of Omaha; and an individual.

Letters of support were submitted by the Metropolitan Utilities District and the Nebraska School Boards Association.

Opponent testimony was provided by Jack Gould, representing Common Cause. Gould stressed that there is no cap on the fees and no appeal process is provided. He also mentioned the out-of-state companies will find a way around the law.

Ken Schilz, Lobbyist for the Consumer Data Network, testified against the bill. The network assembles data for credit bureaus and companies that provide background checks. Schilz expressed that only a couple of companies are causing problems and a law should not be established based on a few issues. He also expressed the four-hour limit for free service provides a balance.

A letter of opposition was submitted by the American Civil Liberties Association.

No action has been reported by the committee.

### **Hearings next week**

The Legislature has enacted the following written position letter policy for public hearings:

- If you are not testifying in person on a bill and would like to submit a written position letter to be included in the official hearing record as an exhibit, the letter must be delivered to the office of the committee chair (or emailed to the committee chair) of the committee conducting the hearing on the bill by 5:00 p.m. on the last work day prior to the public hearing.
- Additionally, the letter must include your name and address, state a position of for, against, or neutral on the bill in question and include a request for the letter to be included as part of the public hearing record.

### **Monday, February 11<sup>th</sup>**

- **Executive Board, Room 1525, Noon.**

### **LB 283 - Provide for a climate change study. Pansing Brooks.**

The bill requires the University of Nebraska to develop a strategic action plan to provide methods for adapting to and mitigating the impacts of climate change. The plan would include:

- (a) A baseline measurement of greenhouse gas emissions, also called a carbon footprint, of the state;
- (b) Measurable benchmarks and goals, including actions needed to meet the goals and benchmarks;
- (c) Assessment of risks and vulnerabilities from negative impacts of climate change;
- (d) Opportunities presented by strategies for adaptation and mitigation of the impacts of climate change;
- (e) Opportunities to improve and increase resilience to the impacts of climate change;
- (f) Potential economic impacts of climate change, both positive and negative;

(g) Examination of impacts of climate change upon the following sectors:

- (i) Agriculture; (ii) Water resources; (iii) Health care and public health; (iv) Energy generation and use; (v) Ecosystems and forestry; (vi) Rural and urban communities; (vii) Transportation; and (viii) Commerce and industry.

The action plan would have to include recommendations for new policies and changes to policies and programs that support the goals based on the information and data collected and generated, including funding needs and recommendations for legislation.

The process to be used to develop the plan would require opportunities for public comment and engagement, including, but not limited to, online input, public hearings, and public and private sector engagement. It would also require input from entomological, climate, water, agricultural, and natural resource experts in Nebraska. Comparable strategic action plans from other states would also be considered.

The plan would be funded from a transfer of up to \$250,000 from the Waste Reduction and Recycling Incentive Fund to the University of Nebraska. The plan would have to be submitted to the Governor and Legislature on or before December 15, 2020.

#### **Wednesday, February 13<sup>th</sup>**

- **Natural Resources Committee, Room 1525. 1:30 PM**

#### **LB 48 - Change provisions relating to sufficient cause for nonuse of a water appropriation. Stinner.**

The bill proposes to change provisions relating to finding of sufficient cause for nonuse of a water appropriation.

The bill would require that sufficient cause for nonuse be deemed to exist for up to 30 years if the land subject to the appropriation is under an acreage reserve program or production quota or is otherwise withdrawn from use as required for participation in any federal, state, or natural resources district program, or such land was previously under such a program but currently is not under such a program and there have been not more than five consecutive years of nonuse on such land subsequent to when that land was last under such program.

Under current law sufficient cause for nonuse for similar programs is limited to up to 15 years.

#### **Thursday, February 14<sup>th</sup>**

- **Natural Resources Committee, Room 1525. 1:30 PM**

#### **LB 177 - Change a termination date for bonding authority of natural resources districts. Lindstrom.**

The bill proposes to extend the authority of the board of directors of a natural resources district encompassing a city of the metropolitan class, upon an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members of the board of directors, to issue negotiable bonds and refunding bonds of the district, entitled flood protection and water quality enhancement bonds. The bill would extend the authority from December 31, 2019 to December 31, 2029.

**LB 53 - Change and provide duties for landowners or their tenants relating to removal of a blockage or obstruction in a watercourse and provide for court costs and attorney's fees. Scheer.**

The bill proposes to change requirements for landowners or their tenants relating to removal of a blockage or an obstruction in a watercourse, slough, or drainage ditch or drainage course.

Current law requires landowners or tenants of such landowners to keep a watercourse, slough, drainage ditch or drainage clear. The bill would add that any blockage or obstruction caused by the landowner or tenant would require such individual to remove such so the watercourse is restored to its natural depth and width.

- **Executive Board, Room 1525, Noon.**

**LB 261 - Require use of redistricting maps drawn using state-issued computer software. DeBoer**

The bill requires using state-issued computer software for mapping all district boundaries.