

SENATOR ELMER: ...where they're buried, and that the cost then of this operation is billed to those two that actually have the buried cable in there rather than all the rest that don't have any there.

SENATOR WITHEM: Again, I think that's probably how it works. That would be determined by the rules and regulations of the one-call that would be governed by the members of it. But I think you're correct in how it does operate.

SENATOR ELMER: So, in all reality, then those people that have the largest numbers of utilities buried, through this process of excavations and where they are, would pay the bulk of the operation; it is so that parts, those utilities that may have very little buried in the state, like our water systems here, would only pay if actually they were identified as being a part of what was buried where an excavation is going to take place.

SENATOR WITHEM: That's my understanding of how it usually works. For instance, I believe in the Omaha area US West ends up paying about a third of the overall budget, because they are the predominant users of the system. So I think you're correct.

SENATOR ELMER: Okay. Those are things I don't think have been talked about. A lot of the things that we have been going around here about have been just technical about prospective liabilities. And a lot of times behind the bill you'll find that the most...that the people that are most interested are those that are going to have to pay the larger amounts of the operational costs, or those that may have greater liabilities, perceived or real, if the bill was passed. And I just wanted to point out that it looked like, through that mechanism of billing and paying for the one-call system, it would seem to be...

SPEAKER BAACK PRESIDING

SPEAKER BAACK: One minute.

SENATOR ELMER: ...relatively fair Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER BAACK: Thank you, Senator Elmer. Senator Vrtiska.

SENATOR VRTISKA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, members of the body. Of course I rise to oppose this particular part of the bill very strenuously because I am concerned about making somebody a part