

groundwater recharge, incidental meaning those areas where surface water is and has been used for a number of years for irrigation purposes. Yet there are groundwater recharge recognition that is taking place and one of the main purposes of LB 198 was to put into place in the statutes a mechanism so that surface irrigation districts could apply for that recognition, whether it was incidental or intentional, and therefore protect their appropriation for the amount of water that they were taking from the river. Now the problem with LB 198, the problem with our current statutes was that there was no real explanation given to those people who the charge of a maximum of 50 cents per acre was going to be applied to for the incidental storage of groundwater recharge. There was no mechanism to indicate any benefits derived, that there actually was recharge taking place. That is what LB 488 is all about. It was introduced to clarify and to clear up in the statutes, to put in some language that would indicate that the appropriation would be granted to those districts and then the charge could be assessed by those districts based on the amount of recharge that was being applied for those parcels of land that the charge would be applied to. This is a very important bill for the central part of this state, for the Tri-County area of this state, the Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District area, because they are in the process right now of going through these applications, they are in the process of determining what their charges will be and how they will assess those charges, and I might add it is a very difficult thing for many of those affected farmers in that area to accept the fact that they are going to have to pay money to pump their own wells, if you will, for groundwater that they have felt has been there all the time. And the problem was that since there was no mechanism in the law, no requirement in the law for the district to have to say to Farmer X that, yes, there if this much benefit because of us being here and because of this groundwater recharge, therefore, we can charge you whatever the amount might happen to be. Also under the current law, the amount was simply a flat 50 cents. Under the provisions of LB 488, it can be a varied amount from zero to 50 cents depending upon the amount of benefit that has been derived by the groundwater recharge. I can tell you that when I first introduced the bill I was apprehensive because I expected a considerable amount of reluctance on the part of the irrigation districts to jump through the hoops, if you will, that are being created by this but I was surprised to find