

looked at it only very briefly but Senator Beutler mentioned something about the county acting kind of arbitrarily on its own and I guess that I think that maybe county governments should have some of that right, just like states have their own state rights concerning national legislation. So I'm really not having any problem right now with this part of the amendment that would allow the county to rear its head and indicate its decision-making powers also. I think that Senator Lamb has done a great study of this whole thing and I've had some involvement with that. I had discussion at numerous times with the NRDs in our area that this involves the Upper Elkhorn...or the Upper Niobrara, I'm sorry, the Middle Niobrara and the Lower Niobrara, along with the Upper Elkhorn. We discussed this at some time even before the legislative session started so I know that the need is there and the people in that area are very receptive to the entire process that Senator Lamb is bringing them. And I just, at this point, would have to urge you to support this amendment. Thank you.

SPEAKER BAACK: Thank you, Senator Dierks. Senator Schrock.

SENATOR SCHROCK: Mr. Speaker and members of the body, Senator Beutler, I think the Natural Resources Commission is an excellent place to start for designation of a protected river. I served on that body for almost four years. That body is made up of 16 members. Three members are appointed by the Governor, one to represent groundwater or deep well interest, one to represent surface water interest and one to represent municipalities. The other 13 members come from the 13 different watersheds of the state. They are selected by their NRDs and elected by watersheds. They serve on the NRDs. They know what their water problems are. They know what their natural resources problems are. And I think this would be an excellent place to start. There would...we would be guaranteed that every segment or every geographic portion of the state would be represented if you start with the Natural Resources Commission. And I can't think of a better place or a better body to handle this situation. And I would just like to speak on behalf of Senator Lamb's amendment.

SPEAKER BAACK: Thank you, Senator Schrock. Senator Beutler. Senator Beutler.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature, just a couple more comments, if I could. I don't want to get too