

engrossing.

SENATOR CROSBY: There is one light on. Senator Elmer.

SENATOR ELMER: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to ask a couple of questions of Senator Baack as the chief sponsor of this bill relative to the state water management plan that's a part of this, lodged with the Department of Environmental Quality. This is a very, very broad authority without hardly any guidelines given as far as this legislation is concerned. I would assume that the Department of Environmental Quality, in cooperation with the Ag Department, would be responsible to use the standard administrative procedures in promulgating this plan. Would you assume that to be true, Senator Baack?

SPEAKER BAACK: Oh, absolutely, Senator Elmer. That's the process that's used here. And I don't think it's as broad an authority as you're saying, but that's your opinion.

SENATOR ELMER: And I would presume also that through this same process that an adequate number of public hearings would be held across the state relative to how this plan is going to be put together?

SPEAKER BAACK: Oh, absolutely. I think that that's just...that's a necessity, whenever you're setting up something like this you automatically...we provide in this state public hearings for everything, and I would assume that the department will automatically do that. They will definitely have hearings.

SENATOR ELMER: And I would also assume that in promulgating this plan and putting it together that all of the work that's been done toward a good, solid management plan, as exhibited by actions taken by NRD's in special management areas and such as this, would become part and parcel of the overall state management plan. Would that be correct?

SPEAKER BAACK: Certainly, Senator Elmer, I think that that's provided for. I think it says that the department will utilize all of the expertise that's available through natural resource districts, through the other departments that have expertise in certain areas as far as regulation goes. They are going to use all of those, and we've set up an advisory committee when they do adopt rules and regulations. I think that the things are in place now for Nebraska to move forward and have this one...one