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FLOOR DEBATE

March 12, 2003      LB 619

there, meaning Swanson and Enders Reservoirs, are, basically they're dead pools as far as water level. It's been estimated Swanson could provide two inches of water to the canal system below Swanson, which is not of beneficial use to anyone. Enders is projected to have no water to release this summer and, hence, comes the bill. We do not feel that two inches of water being released from Swanson is of beneficial use and actually, under the statutes of the irrigation district, if one person down there in the canal, what we call the Meeker Canal system, would ask for their water, they'd have to release the water, charge the canal and so on, but it would not be beneficial use. So what this bill does, it provides for the irrigation district to not deliver that two inches of water. Also, it would be delivered, that two inches, in a period of two to three weeks, which does not help grow anything. We feel it would be much more beneficial to store that two inches of water in Swanson and hopefully accumulate enough water over the summer and fall, if it rains at all, so they could irrigate out of these lakes next year, in 2004. So the bill allows the district to hold the water in the lakes there, Enders and Swanson, not deliver any water unless the majority of the water users request it. There's not been one single water user out of Swanson or Enders request that potential two inches of water...in the case of Enders, none...so it relieves the district of liability if they do not deliver the water on the basis it's not beneficial use. It also clarifies the language that would require a majority of the water users would have to request that that water be released. That way one or two users on the canal system couldn't force them to charge the entire canal for two inches of water. And then it also allows the users to not be affected by the three-year requirement. If you don't use your surface water appropriation for three years in a row, you'll lose your appropriation. Well, this lets them roll that over so that if they refuse it this year they'd still have a three-year window to use their water in the future. That is the bill. I'd be most happy to answer any questions. It's a rather unique situation we have in southwest Nebraska and the confusion with the statutes and what actually is happening out there in reality. So be glad to answer any questions. With that, I return the rest of my time to the Chair. Thank you.