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FLOOR DEBATE

March 12, 2003 LB 619, 739

PRESIDENT HEINEMAN: Thank you, Senator Baker. Chair would recognize Senator Schrock.

SENATOR SCHROCK: Mr. Lieutenant Governor, members of the Legislature, the Natural Resources Committee did hold a hearing on LB 739. This is what I would call a very practical amendment. In those irrigation districts in southwest Nebraska, where the reservoirs do not hold much water right now, it doesn't make sense for them to take irrigation water and try to apply it to the land because there's not enough there to provide any beneficial use. The committee did make a few adjustments to the bill, with Senator Baker's permission, and we have advanced it to General File. This looks like a good place to put it. And for those areas of the state where they don't have much water, better not to try and irrigate anything as to put two inches out there, because two inches won't do any good. So I would encourage you to vote for this amendment. It makes a lot of sense for surface water irrigation projects that don't have any water. It's unfortunate that we're in that situation. I'm sure if we'd had full reservoirs Senator Baker wouldn't be bringing this bill to us, so let's try and help out the people in the drier areas of the state conserve what water they have, and it just doesn't make any sense to try and withdraw water from these reservoirs, and that's what this bill is all about. I'd encourage you to adopt this amendment.

PRESIDENT HEINEMAN: Thank you, Senator Schrock. Chair recognizes Senator Jones.

SENATOR JONES: Mr. Lieutenant Governor and members of the body, I want to stand up for strong support for this amendment too because I realize the situation over there with two reservoirs dry. And we had the hearing and there was no opposition to it and it's come out 8 to 0. And I think that this could be something that might even get used besides just over there. It might even be used in the Platte River before this summer is over with too. Who knows? But I think it's something we really need to get on to, and it does have the emergency clause on it so that it will help protect this year's irrigation. So I want you to support this amendment. Thank you.