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FLOOR DEBATE

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LB 916, 962

time when we thought we couldn't exhaust it. That's not correct. We've had well drilling moratoriums on the Upper Republican, Chase, Dundy, and Perkins County, for years. They've learned to manage their water. I'm sorry if you have a particular piece of ground that has a well on it, and there's one beside it that you can't drill it, maybe just as good a quality land, and there may be water under it, but we just simply can't deplete the resource. So from practical experience in western Nebraska, I'm saying, we need to sit up and pay attention to what we've done out there, because it's going to spread across the state. And the drought, I have to admit, has...causes a great deal of trouble out in western Nebraska, and some in the east. But it's simply focused the attention we need to on water. And the drought could go away this year, could very well. But we've changed farming practices to where we don't let water run off, and our lakes out in the southwest part of the state are basically runoff-fed lakes. I don't know that they're ever going to fill if we continue to try and irrigate out of them. It doesn't look like we're going to irrigate out of any of them or...I shouldn't say any of them, but several of them, this summer. We're not going to have any surface water released out of at least some of them. So my...I want to stress that we're in this situation, western Nebraska, now. Senator Erdman pointed out, and myself, Senator Schrock, we're here now. And it's going to spread across the state. It's a statewide issue. We need to fund it. And we have a beginning of that through the appropriation process, the General Fund money, with the A bill. We have the ability, the NRDs, to help fund their part of it. Out here on the floor there's a bill there. I think we need to advance the bill. And it's demonstrated to be a statewide need, and I think we need the support of the state to get this bill moved. Thank you.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Baker. (Visitors introduced.) On with discussion of amendment FA1524 offered by Senator Chambers to the first division of the divided committee amendments to LB 962. Senator Beutler.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Senator Cudaback, members of the Legislature, I just wanted to say a couple of additional things about the LB 916 fees. For those of you who were here on the floor,