

May 8, 1979

LB 595

get the money and appropriate it and be done with this plan. It's really ironic this morning Senator Schmit taking the position he has and I taking the position I have, and I've been an advocate and supporter of the Natural Resource Districts, of the Natural Resource Commission. I don't think anybody has supported them as vigorously and as enthusiastically as I have. I'm not anti-Natural Resource District, I'm not anti-Natural Resource Commission, and my voting record and my speaking record through the past five years will nothing but verify that. I can't understand how people can sit and say they would rather have all the authority vested in a bureaucracy rather than the authority vested in an elected body. That's what we're talking about. Either this Legislature has some oversight through the selection process of that Board, and yes, we're going to have some pressure, but that's why we're down here is to have some pressure. Or we're going to abdicate our responsibility and put that responsibility into some bureaucracy where we're protected and sheltered and clothed against. Now I can stand the heat and I can have the responsibility. I'm not afraid. I don't need to put this appointed process in the Natural Resource Commission to protect my political flanks or whatever flanks I need to protect, or whatever interest I may want to protect. And the environmentalist, and that's the new word for conservationist, and I see nothing wrong with conservationism. I see nothing wrong with conserving our natural resources or conserving water, and I don't see where conservation works at the detriment of agriculture. Agriculture has farthered conservation. Agriculture has done more for conservation than any other industry, because conservation helps agriculture and the two work together, and now to try to put a split as some people on this body are between conservationist and agriculture is unconscionable and unheard of and something that just should never happen on the floor of this Legislature. Agriculture is as interested in future water supply as cities, as industry, as people, as anyone else, and try to make this an urban rural split is ridiculous. We're all in this together whether we're from the city or whether we're from the farm. We're all interested in water and we all must have it, but we must have a sensible, sound, thorough, complete, broad, workable plan, and we must have thorough, complete, broad public input. We can't narrow that input to the Sierra Club, to the conservationist, to industry, to agriculture, to consumers. To narrow it to any one group is wrong, because we all have an interest, and I'm afraid that if we let the Natural Resource Commission make these appointments with no other oversight, that's just exactly what we're doing.

4855