

in allowing members of this body when they are unsuccessful in a committee with a proposal to come to the floor of this legislature and ask that we collectively consider the merits of a proposal that has already been defeated. I think if we wish to maintain the integrity of the committee system at all that we not allow this particular practice to become one here in the legislature that we will tolerate. For that reason I'm certainly hopeful that the members of this body will keep that in mind when they vote on this particular amendment. I think that we could certainly open to ourselves as a body a number of bills in the form of amendments that really have no reason for being on the floor of this legislature. But since you have ruled that it is going to be germane, I would like to address some of the points that Senator Koch has made relative to the decision that was made by the Metropolitan Utility District regarding the provision of free water to these subdivisions of government. During the last five years at various times the board collectively or committees of the board have given consideration to the subject of free water to cities and schools and most of the discussions have revolved around three particular areas, those being rates, conservation and appropriate cost accounting for governmental entities. I would like to take those one at a time and give you the rationale under each category. In 1976, and I'm addressing the initial point, that being rates, MUD's residential users started to change. There was a flat rate that was established in 1979. Now beginning in 1979 MUD's residential water customers saw the rate go from a flat rate to a totally inverted conservation rate. Now when this occurred, they experienced that they were receiving some complaints from their customers about excessive watering of lawns etc. and among those complaints were complaints against the schools and the city parks for excessive watering. As a matter of fact in the metropolitan Omaha area certain members of the news media carried stories about city park fountains and school water fountains which were running continuously during this time. Now it became more and more difficult for the board of directors to justify increased rates to its residential customers when free water rights were being abused. Now MUD's goal on water rates in its 1981 budget is to have no increase. That means no increase to its customers collectively. The amount of free water to cities and schools is equivalent to almost 2% in the rates which have to be passed on to their customers. Lets turn for a moment to the subject of conservation. There is no reasonable way to expect that people are going to conserve this resource when they receive it totally and