

May 8, 1981

LB 252

SENATOR LAMB: Mr. President and members, I rise to support the bill. As you will notice, as a member of the Public Works Committee, I did not support the bill when it came out of committee. The reason I did not support it is because I did not think it gave enough protection to the basin of origin. I think the basin of origin should have first shot at the water. I think any reasonable person will say that water should be used at home before it is transferred somewhere else. It is expensive to transfer that water. So the basin of origin should have a little bit of protection. I see this bill as giving almost no protection to the basin of origin. However, at this point I will support the bill because it does lean in that direction. Now, Senator Kremer, and this, we have gone over this before, but the debate has been so extensive that I am afraid some people have forgotten about it and I apologize for taking the time, but I must repeat some of the best arguments in support of this bill. Now we have been quoting the High Plains study of the Ogallala aquifer and I will just quote part of it. Now admittedly this is talking about basins, big basins between states, but in my opinion the same reasoning applies to smaller basins within states, and I will quote, "The present uses and perspective future needs for beneficial purposes for the foreseeable future in the potential basin of origin of surplus water will be considered as having prior rights to the waters involved." Now this is from the High Plains study of which Senator Kremer is a member. So if it applies to huge river basins, there is no logical reasons to believe that it does not apply to small river basins. I think Senator Vickers has overreacted to this bill. This bill is not designed to stop interbasin transfer of water. What it merely does is give the basin of origin a chance to utilize that water before it is transferred to another basin for an equal use, very logical, very reasonable assumption, and that should become law. I certainly support LB 252.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Haberman. There are one, two, three, four, five, six more.

SENATOR HABERMAN: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, I rise to oppose 252. Senator Lamb said that the bill is not designed to stop the intertransition of water. There isn't a Senator on the floor of this Legislature that is not concerned with the millions and millions and millions of acre feet of water that goes down the river to the ocean and that is wasted every year. Every Senator on this floor will agree that that is a fact, that it goes to waste. We cannot use it. 49 Senators will agree to that fact. So what does this bill do? This bill makes it harder,