

to have local control in the State of Nebraska why we need to give the local authorities the power they need to truly effectively deal with the problem, and some of the amendments that I am presenting to the Legislature today will enhance the amount of authority that the local Natural Resource Districts would have. Now as you know, over the last three or four years and extending into the next three or four years we have appropriated hundreds of thousands of dollars for the State Water Planning and Review Process. A number of reports have been or are being or will be prepared on various subjects. In the fall of last year the State Water Planning and Review Process completed the groundwater reservoir and management study in which they discussed all the various options that we have of regulating and controlling the use of groundwater in the state in order to preserve that water for purposes of agriculture and irrigation to as long an extent as possible. Now after that study was completed in November of 1981 with a number of appendixes and supplements and so forth, why the Natural Resources Commission held hearings on the study around the state and then the NRC published its own comments and recommendations of the Natural Resources Commission on the study itself. Now shortly I will be distributing to you a copy of those four pages of comments and recommendations. Now one of the principal recommendations of the Natural Resources Commission, and this just recently received some publicity in the paper following the last debate that we had on LB 375, was the recommendation that we here in the Legislature establish maximum allowable depletion rates that can be adopted by the Natural Resource Districts, and that maximum allowable depletion rate is 1 percent of the aquifer per year or as the Natural Resource Commission states it, 5 percent over a 5-year period. Now this amendment essentially incorporates that explicit recommendation of the Natural Resources Commission into LB 375. Now as I indicated, the comments and recommendations will shortly be distributed to you. They are in the process of being prepared now, but let me read to you a short paragraph in those comments and recommendations and this again is from the Natural Resources Commission. This language was passed around to the members of the commission, prepared by the staff and ultimately received the approval of the entire commission. Now let me read this so you will understand what this amendment does and where it comes from. Now the comments and recommendations say, "The Legislature should establish the maximum allowable depletion rate that can be adopted by an NRD. We recommend that the maximum allowable depletion rate be no greater than 5 percent of the saturated thickness over a 5-year period. Any NRD