

giving the locally elected county boards the kind of authorities they need to fulfill their responsibilities, whether it's road building or whatever other sort of responsibilities they have. In the area of city government we have not had any problems in delegating to the locally elected officials the authorities to carry out their responsibilities but for some reason when it comes to water we want to hang onto all the power. When it comes to water we are not willing to give the locally elected Natural Resource Districts that we've given the responsibility for managing and conserving our water resources the kind of statutory tools they effectively need to do the job. Now one opponent to this bill has talked about how people that are in favor of this bill want to stop irrigation in the sandhills. Well that is nonsense. The people that are in favor of this bill simply want to give the Natural Resource Districts, the locally elected, locally controlled Natural Resource Districts, the power and the authority to do their job. That is all this bill does. We're not making any policy decisions about how water is to be managed on the floor of the Legislature. We're not making any policy decisions here about irrigation development in the Sandhills. All we're saying is, let's let the Natural Resource Districts have enough tools so they can begin to make some policy decisions themselves. Now I know that some of you have argued that this is unnecessary because we just passed LB 375 but the problem with that argument is that it's going to take LB 375 four to five years to work, four to five years for the Natural Resource Districts to begin to implement the management plans before they can even set up a management area in order to begin to do any allocating or any other effective management of the water. There is nothing at all inconsistent about this bill and LB 375. LB 375 is one kind of grant of authority of the NRDs. LB 726 is another kind of grant of authority of the NRDs. If you believe in local control of our water problems, if you believe in delegating power down to the local level, that is what LB 326 (sic.) does and I would urge you to vote in favor of it. Thank you, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT: The Chair recognizes Senator Howard Peterson.

SENATOR H. PETERSON: Mr. Chairman and members of the Legislature, it appears to me there is an entire area that we have overlooked this afternoon. We said in an urban area we control development by planning commissions either on a city planning commission or a city-county planning commission. That same authority exists in the Sandhills. I submit to you that the problem in the Sandhills is not water control but land use control. If the county boards in the Sandhills wish to operate as planning commissions, they can do that under the statutes or they can appoint a planning commission and under that planning commission they could control the use of the Sandhills. If you're concerned about what is