

April 8, 1982

LB 726

SENATOR VICKERS: Mr. President and members, obviously I arise to oppose the Peterson amendment or the Peterson motion. Senator Kahle and Senator Peterson both indicated that this would probably close down a lot of irrigation or preclude a lot of irrigation development in the Platte Valley. You know, it might come as a surprise to both of those gentlemen to know that I grew up in the Platte Valley. It might come as a surprise to them to know that I carried irrigation tubes over my back. I carried a canvas dam over my back and tromped out there over the middle of a cornfield in the middle of the night. I know a little bit about irrigation. I know a little bit about farming in the Platte Valley. And I can tell you that I also know the people in the Platte Valley. I have got a lot of relation that live down there yet. And I trust local control, and it is pretty obvious where some of these hand-outs that came out with various people's initials on them... it is pretty obvious to me where they came from, and they certainly didn't come from perhaps just their offices. There was also a couple of letters sent out from a couple of NRDs that indicated to Senator Lamb that they were opposed to the bill. I think that is rather strange since I have letters from the same NRDs telling me that they were in favor of it. So, obviously, there must be some people out there that perhaps talk out of different sides of the mouth depending on who they are talking to perhaps, or something, I don't know, I don't quite understand that. The bottom line is if you will care to look at the memo that I sent around, the bottom line is local control. If you want to look at item 2...any impact on subirrigation will not trigger a control area. There must be first of all local support for a control area. Now, obviously, in the Platte Valley the local support wouldn't be there. Secondly, there has to be hydrological evidence that subirrigation is being destroyed by the groundwater users, and Senator Kahle, the Platte River going up or down wouldn't be other groundwater users. That wouldn't have a thing to do and certainly wouldn't allow a control area to be established even if they wanted one. And, thirdly, local consensus has to be there that there will be a greater economic hardship to the area as a whole if development is not regulated than if it is. I believe that is important. You know, the fact of the matter is...the fact of the matter is this Legislature likes to espouse local control, but we are scared to death of it. We like to say that we want the local people to control their destinies, but then we in turn are afraid that they might. Sometimes I think we are afraid that they might, not because we individually are afraid that they might, but because we collectively are lobbied by certain interests to protect their interest and we wind up protecting perhaps interest other than the local peoples.

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