

point. And Senator Schmit will have a much better background than I will on this particular bill but what I have been able to establish on the history of the bill that there was a very, very complex water bill issue that was coming through and it did divide the body quite extensively. There was a dollar fee per acre for incidentally stored water in the bill and the committee took it and changed that to zero. And then in the context of the discussion on the floor, a compromise was reached at 50 cents of which, even at that, it was feared that the bill itself, because of other potential problems, would not pass, but the bill did pass with the 50 cent per acre in there. Since that time, Senator Wesely, people that have had, for example, in my area and really throughout the state that have had incidentally stored water, what's happened is the water table has risen in their areas through no dealings of their own, maybe it's seepage through a canal system, what have you, and there is a fee on the books that says that another entity can charge them 50 cents an acre for pumping of water that they didn't have anything to do with it being there in the first place and has caused a lot of controversy. When the ranchers and farmers have gone to the areas that...where the agencies or entities, if you wish, that would be able to charge the fee, the entities say, we do not want to charge the fee, we will never charge a fee, for the most part, so we were stuck with the idea of, okay, if people were upset that there might be a fee, let's go ahead and remove it. And all the areas that were affected by this came to a conclusion that this is, in fact, the way that we wanted to go. If, in the future, there would need to be a problem or somebody would need to file, then we would have to go back years and put a fee, but right now neither side really wants that particular fee in there. All the other fees that were a part of that bill, by the way, you are referring to will remain intact.

SENATOR WESELY: What I recall in carrying on...

SPEAKER BARRETT: Senator Wesely.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you. Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation, I think, was the primary sponsor of this incidental fee question and I think it must have been about six or seven years ago. But, evidently, what's happened is what they thought was a circumstance that they needed this authority, they no longer feel that now or in the future that will be a necessity, so they're...and the confusion is now causing everybody involved just to decide not to even get into this issue. Is that right?