

SENATOR SCHMIT: Mr. President and members, this amendment, 1709, is an amendment which I have offered and I would like to have some comments on it. I do not know what the position is relative to available cash. At the present time we have a number of bills, of course, which will require a substantial amount of money, but I thought it was only appropriate that I would offer at this time an amendment which will provide that \$20 million in a Cash Reserve Fund to be pledged as a source for future state appropriations to match federal, local or private funds in the construction of water impoundment or ground water recharge projects. As you know, if you have watched the press the last few days, a number of communities are beginning to experience and to become concerned about the relative shortage of water in their communities. We, of course, experienced a severe drought last year, not as severe as some of our states to the east. We are below normal moisture conditions at the present time. We anticipate, of course, that we will always luck out, but the facts are that the State of Nebraska regularly and routinely and in some degree of consistency experiences drought. Nebraska, more than most states, relies upon its ground water both for domestic and agricultural use and as well as commercial use. There are those who have a distinct difference of opinion with myself as to whether or not ground water recharge projects are appropriate for the state to invest their resources. There are also those who would question whether or not water impoundment should be a proper activity of state government. I choose to believe that those objections are valid for the State of Nebraska and that we do have a responsibility to try to provide for adequate sources of water for future generations. We have evidence, of course, that present impoundments do favorably affect the recharge of the aquifer here in Nebraska. We have from time to time experienced heavy rainfall only to see that water rush off down the rivers and streams and out into the Gulf of Mexico, not to be of any use to us during periods of drought. I believe that it is proper during times like this when we do have, at least to some extent, some surplus funds, that we try to earmark, and that's maybe the wrong word, try to set aside a certain amount of money to match other funds for such projects. During the number of years that I have been here we have talked about it almost routinely, but we have not entered into any kind of major water impoundment or water recharge project. I would like to offer this amendment and I would take any advice or comments and accept very graciously any criticism that might be voiced