

year we've had and a potential of another, maybe we can refocus some of our attention back on the concern that Senator Schmit is bringing. And I think, not to be critical of this Legislature, the demand for preserving our natural resources, in particular our water resources, whether you're talking about the quality of that water or the quantity of the water, this Legislature should be making a better commitment to that natural resource. So, as I said, I support Senator Schmit's efforts to focus some attention on this problem that I think is going to be facing us again this year, which is the drought is going to cause a tremendous drain upon Nebraska's aquifer and I think the problem is, we're going to be playing catch up. The problem can't be addressed immediately, but we should at least begin refocusing some attention in an area that is vitally important to all citizens of Nebraska since not only do we irrigate out of that aquifer, but the largest share of the drinking water that comes in this state is ground water and we need to make sure and protect and preserve that very important commodity.

PRESIDENT: Thank you. May I introduce some guests, please, in the north balcony. Senator Chizek has 52 fourth graders and two teachers from the Walt Disney Elementary School in Millard, Nebraska. Would you teachers and students please rise so that we may welcome you. Thank you for visiting us today. Senator Warner, please, followed by Senator Schmit and Senator Owen Elmer.

SENATOR WARNER: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, this amendment is similar to a discussion that we held during one of the hearings, one of the public hearings which a number of people who appeared in support, and as I recall it was LB 716, which was a straight out appropriation for...appropriation I think was to the Water Management Fund if I remember correctly, Water Management Board and other conservation work. But during the course of that hearing a couple of the witnesses talked about the situation in other states and as I recall it was Washington, Wyoming and it seems to me Arizona, although I do not recall for sure if that was the third state, but in any event, those were states, and Wyoming is the better example I suspect, those are states that had a sizable fund and in the case of Wyoming I believe it's from their severance tax, where they have deposited funds or retain a fund which they subsequently use to pledge to try and attract federal funds for certain water...large water projects. And the point that some of those who appeared was making, that in the absence of any