

SENATOR MORRISSEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and members. The committee amendments simply makes it from five years to three years. Instead of extending the life of the groundwater conservation districts for five years, we on the committee felt it was better to just go with the three years. The groundwater conservation districts are basically a holdover from districts that used to be all across the state. Now I believe we just have one left and they do similar duties to the natural resources districts and I'd urge you to adopt the committee amendments. It goes strictly to three years so we can review it again in three years to see if it is still necessary to keep the remaining groundwater conservation districts. If you have any questions on the specifics and the history of the groundwater conservation districts, I am sure the introducers of the bill could answer those.

SPEAKER BAACK: Is there any discussion on the committee amendments? Senator Rod Johnson.

SENATOR R. JOHNSON: Mr. Speaker, members, the reason Senator Morrissey carried the committee amendments today instead of myself is that I am not in agreement with the committee action and rather than prostitute that system, I guess I've decided to stand and oppose the amendments and have Senator Morrissey, as the Vice Chair, present the committee amendments. Senator Moore and I and Senator Coordsen are the co-sponsors of this bill, although Senator Moore is the principal sponsor. There is a conservation district in those districts, Senator Moore's, myself and Senator Coordsen, the Blue River Conservation District which is working with the Upper Big Blue NRD principally on water quality issues. As Senator Morrissey has indicated, this particular proposal would extend the life of those districts for five more years. The committee chose, under Senator Lamb's motion, to cut that figure back to three years and we would simply like to see it extended, the sunset, for five years instead of three. What we're doing is basically saving another bill in three years from now to ask for the Legislature to reapprove these districts. There is a strong cooperative effort that has been ongoing between the conservation district and the NRD districts, principally in the area of water quality and irrigation scheduling and so forth. It works well in our area. We had a testifier from the Upper Big Blue that came in and supported the extension of the conservation districts and so I would ask you to vote against