

SENATOR SCHMIT: Senator, the legislature, a number of years ago, increased the maximum allowable levy for the natural resource districts. Since we've never gotten any money out of the Appropriations Committee to amount to anything, I don't expect any great big increase there under the new Chairman. And so we will just have to hump it on our own, I suppose. But, seriously, we will be glad to accept any additional funds you might want to give us, and do so gratefully.

SENATOR MOORE: If my mike's still...I mean the question, though, is that if you give the NRDs this sort of additional authority, as they did in the groundwater quality...groundwater quantity issue, they came back and asked for some additional taxing authority. I guess my...I'm asking you to peer in your crystal ball, and is that a possibility in your mind, they may need some additional taxing authority if we don't do our share which you are absolutely correct there.

SENATOR SCHMIT: Yes, any worthwhile government agency knows how to grow and I would expect that they will come back sometime and want some more money. But I would say this that the Legislature then can view that proposal in the context of what they are doing and I think, very frankly and honestly, Senator, and I appreciate your interest, that other responsibilities of the Natural Resource Districts will not be as high a priority as will be water quality and I think that we can probably get by without a major increase and, hopefully, without any kind of a levy increase.

SENATOR MOORE: I liked your last statement there about districts getting a higher priority. I wanted that in the record. You said it just like on key, Senator Schmit, as usual.

SPEAKER BAACK: Thank you, Senator Moore. Is there any further discussion on LB 51? Senator Schmit, do you wish to close?

SENATOR SCHMIT: Well, Senator, as soon as I knew what you wanted I gave it to you. And, of course, one of the nice things about the Legislature is that no Legislature can bind a succeeding Legislature, let alone bind individuals. But I do think that we have here a bill which recognizes that which has been addressed many times on this floor, the need for improving and protecting the quality of the water in the State of Nebraska. I believe the NRDs are capable and qualified to do that. I believe they will pursue it aggressively and, of