

Seems like the problem started back in the late seventies when the irrigation district rehabed the project. A new reservoir was built, more efficient use of water, more efficient delivery systems were installed. One thing that should be noted at all times, the storage rights were maintained in Lake McConaughy that water cannot be used for any other purpose than beneficial use for irrigated land in the south central part of the state. I think the irrigation district was lulled to sleep about the importance of obtaining these water rights. It seems like water rights should be a simple process of a secretary sending a slip of paper to the state and receiving it back, but what they found out and what we have found out later is there were 2,400 water right transfers from one property to another. These water right transfers had to be signed by the first party and the second party both. Some of these parties lived a long ways away and it was difficult to obtain signatures on proper documents. The district made the mistake by not filing on a monthly basis every water right transfer that took place. They thought that they could do this all at once and so they held onto the water right transfers. Now we face the situation that could be very detrimental financially to my area of the state. We have farmers with loans on irrigated land that they now have no water for. It could be detrimental to the state because a lot of corn is grown in that area. This area involves 50 square miles. It's 32,000 acre feet and it involves 50 square miles of water rights. It is hard to understand how something so important could be neglected. It is interesting to note that in the hearings in Bertrand right now the only objectors we have to the water rights is the State of Wyoming. Also interesting to note is if this irrigation district was in the State of Wyoming, it would not have water right problems at this time. The State of Wyoming only requires that irrigation districts have storage rights. They can deliver the water to any amount of property, any undesignated property that they want to. So here we have an entity objecting to water rights which would be contrary to their law in the State of Wyoming. My bill would offer a window of opportunity for farmers to receive water based on the history of the past three years that they have received water. They cannot receive more water than the most water they received in any one of the past three years. Nobody knows for sure what is going to happen at the water hearings. We all believe Mike Jess will grant the water rights, but through objectors and through hearing process it could be quite lengthy. At this time farmers are preparing for the 1992 crop season. They are booking fertilizer, they are buying seed corn, they need to know as soon