

also support the bill. I think the issue has been pretty well defined by the previous speakers that this is a reasonable bill. It allows two years for the resolution of the problem. There certainly has been some errors made, but at this point the most expeditious thing that can be done and should be done is to advance the bill.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Lamb. Senator Morrissey. Senator Horgan.

SENATOR HORGAN: Thank you, Madam President, I, too, would rise in support of the bill. As a member of the Natural Resources Committee I appreciated the opportunity to view or to listen to some of the debate, but I think there are some points that need to be made about the Central Irrigation District. I think Senator Johnson is right when he says there is plenty, perhaps, of blame to go around for everyone including the Department of Water Resources and this is a critical bill as Senator Schrock has pointed out, and it involves some of the activities of Central Irrigation District. I think you all ought to know that when we were in the committee hearing it was the intention of the district not to testify on behalf of this bill. They weren't testifying in support of it, they weren't testifying in opposition to it, they weren't testifying neutral, they weren't testifying until a committee member asked that they come forward and try and discuss it. And I'll have to tell you some of the answers provided in that committee hearing were not very satisfactory. Some of those were that this has been going on since at least the early 1970s, that there was an awareness of the need for these permits, but that there was a construction project in 1984 that they weren't going to do anything with until after that was completed in 1984 and then they did file some forms altogether on these thousand plus permits, but they did it on the wrong form so it was rejected in 1989. And they haven't gotten around to reapplying to get the right form to fill it out. The question was asked in the committee, who is legally liable if these farmers are turned off on their water? Who is responsible? Is the State of Nebraska responsible for these permits not being filled out? Is the Department of Water Resources responsible? And the best answer was, no, probably not. Central Irrigation District is responsible because they hadn't done their job. Nebraska Public Power came forward and said they would do it on a monthly basis. Central Irrigation District hasn't done it in over 18 years. No wonder they thought it was an overwhelming task. They hadn't done it in