

February 12, 1992 LB 306

fair that we spread the concern for water use over all parties involved and not just a select few. With that, I guess I will relinquish the rest of my time, Mr. Speaker, to Senator Schmit.

SPEAKER BAACK: Senator Schmit.

SENATOR SCHMIT: Thank you, Senator Johnson and Mr. Speaker. I share the same concerns as Senator Johnson has expressed to you relative to the conservation requirements that need to be expressed in this bill, but I also have a greater concern which I've also discussed with Senator Rod Johnson and Senator Wickersham, Senator Schellpeper and many others on this floor. As we know, historically the order of priority has been domestic use first, livestock and agriculture second and on down the line and industry has come after agriculture. I believe that under this kind of an amendment, Senator Beutler, and I'll have to ask one of the attorneys here, yourself or Senator Wickersham or Landis or someone, I believe this kind of an amendment would change the order of priority. It would put agriculture after industry. That is a very major change and it may be one which we do not have the votes to stop, but it certainly appears to me that agriculture which is basically livestock and crop production and which needs to have certain amounts of water at a certain time and cannot operate on an accelerated basis, but must operate within the confines of nature should not be placed after industry. Someone told me once, I think, I'm not sure if it was MUD or someone, that about 38 percent of the Omaha water supply was utilized by industry and I would hope that we would address that issue...

SPEAKER BAACK: One minute.

SENATOR SCHMIT: ...in some detail here this morning because I'm sure it is not Senator Beutler's intent that we put industry ahead of agriculture. Secondly, I think it is important also to recognize that, that domestic needs vary widely in their interpretation. Domestic need is water for the necessity of human survival and for operation of a household, et cetera. But does it, as Senator Rod Johnson had indicated, apply to the irrigation of golf courses, lawns, utilization for swimming pools and other nonnecessary uses as opposed to the use of water for livestock and for irrigation. I think that we need to address this issue and the interrelationship between surface water and groundwater is important and we must acknowledge that that does exist in some instances.