

draw two feet below the surrounding lands and having a continuous outlet to a stream of water, river, brook shall be deemed a water course. That's not very close to a natural stream. It would seem to me, Senator Beutler, that some place in the course of this...the progress of this particular bill that we need to arrive at a definition for natural stream because if, in fact, the only definition that exists is that for water course, it would be conceptually possible for almost all of the state to be appropriated by one entity based upon that definition and I do not believe that to be your intent with this bill so I would certainly be willing to have conversation in regard to the definition of a natural stream that we might include in this should your bill become successful. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER BAACK: Thank you, Senator Coordsen. Senator Hillman, you're next.

SENATOR HILLMAN: Mr. Speaker, members, Senator Beutler, I have a few concerns I'd like to explain first and then perhaps ask you a question. I guess one of the first statements I would say that though this may be perceived somewhat as a Lincoln-Omaha bill, in looking at those cities, understand that in western Nebraska the City of Gering has two municipal wells right next to the north Platte River and had to drill another one because of low water supplies and so looking at those kinds of issues, I think they are clear across the state. I don't think it is just a Lincoln-Omaha type thing. I think what we're talking about here, or that you're drilling wells that get their water from groundwater. That groundwater again is furnished or is replenished through irrigation, instream flows, return flows and it's all very, very interrelated. In addition to that, when you're talking about wells and groundwater, another thing that you have is surface irrigation which in many instances creates those streams and creates those rivers and without that surface irrigation you wouldn't have that whole system that is feeding into your groundwater. There are many practices that are starting. There are some that are being encouraged that looks at water conservation when it comes to surface irrigation that would affect and supposedly conserve water that would affect and impact, groundwater and seepage, and I guess my point is in all these fragmented statements here is how will this bill impact the total issues on water and if we do one thing in one place, what will it do to another? And I have some real concerns is when we have legislation that does one thing and we do not