

with the bill before the old Public Works Committee. While we're debating this bill here, and I've discussed this at some length and I...and I, in a way, I appreciate Senator Beutler bringing the bill to us because it gives me an opportunity to talk, I guess, about my favorite theme and that is that I believe that the threat to Nebraska's water, both surface and underground, is much greater from out-of-state interests than it is from in-state interests. If all million, six-hundred thousand people of Nebraska stood at the trough and drank water all day long, you couldn't lower the water table underneath Nebraska by a fraction of an inch. There's 40 feet of it, would cover the State of Nebraska from one border to the other if you took the underground water and put it on top. That's not the threat. The threat is, of course, the distribution. The threat is what happens in times of drought. The threat is what happens if population continues to concentrate in certain areas where there might not be an adequate supply of water. But there isn't any way that a farmer's going to deny the urban person that water. While we're looking at this, I believe that Nebraska ought to try to make a precedent, establish a precedent and lay down the rules that says our water belongs to Nebraskans. If it's going to be transported out of the state then there ought to be a severance tax. I had that bill before the Revenue Committee and there were a lot of chuckles going around the...around the committee that day and, of course, it never went anywhere. The facts are the gentlemen on that committee will be proven to be a little bit lax in time to come because there will be applications made in the future for transfers out of the state great distances by methods of transfer not known to us today and somebody's going to say, why didn't the Nebraska Legislature, at a time when they could have done it, protected our water supply from being raided by the sun belt states? So, I am...my sympathy is with Senator Beutler, but...

PRESIDENT MOUL: One minute.

SENATOR SCHMIT: ..my heart is with the farmers and, as of now, I would like to see Senator Beutler and many of the rest of you concentrate some energy on the entire problem and that is protecting that water supply for all Nebraskans and I'd like to visit with you some more about it later on.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Schmit. Senator Nelson. Senator Nelson. Senator Wesely.