

meetings. There were many people that attended them. They were always covered by the press. There were always people there from all viewpoints and from all perspectives. The issues that are presented to you in 108 have been discussed almost to death in those forums, and I say, almost to death because a part of that discussion is the extended process that you now see in the bill. I am not objecting to that process because I think it is available and will, ultimately, protect the people's rights, and it will protect their interests. But to now suggest that that process is inappropriate is incredible. That process is there for a reason. It is maybe more process than we would like, but it is the kind of a process that you must have if people's interests are to be legitimately protected. That was a direct outgrowth, as I will note again, of the many, many meetings that were held. I was not able to attend the last meeting of the Governor's Water Council in which some of these amendments were adopted. I think I was able to attend all the others except the first one. I do remember a point at which there was an unanimous vote in the water council, and it had to do with the submission of what we consider to be an interim report to the Governor. I think Senator Dierks read from part of that interim report. You can read the transcript. The vote to submit that interim report was unanimous. That vote even included people who had said that they were opposed to the objectives, they were opposed to the policies being discussed, they were opposed, peric', and still they voted to submit the interim report to the Governor which included what was then a draft of a bill that later became known as LB 108. I was somewhat apprehensive at that point, quite frankly, personally, about submitting a draft of a bill. I had been appointed to a drafting committee and we were to work on the report. It became clear, though, as we were working, and if Senator Dierks wants to criticize us for rehashing an old study that was done in 1986, he can criticize us, if he wants to.

SPEAKER WITHEM: One minute.

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: The material was available and it was still valid. We incorporated that material for its illustrative purposes and then the provisions of the bill that later became 108 coalesced what our views were, how we perceived that the issues that were raised in our discussions could be addressed. That was intended as a starting point, as a focal point for the discussion. It worked. Now whether anybody thought we should