

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Thank you, Senator Beutler. Senator Hudkins.

SENATOR HUDKINS: Thank you, Mr. President and members of the body. Senator Beutler, if I might ask you a few questions.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Senator Beutler.

SENATOR HUDKINS: Senator Beutler, we're talking about ground water users and surface water users, and you say that these areas of water are interrelated. If they are interrelated and if the relationship is equal, then should the rights of the parties, the ground water users and the surface water irrigators, also be equal?

SENATOR BEUTLER: Senator, I'm not sure...

SENATOR HUDKINS: All right, let me go on.

SENATOR BEUTLER: ...I don't...that doesn't...

SENATOR HUDKINS: Right...right now...

SENATOR BEUTLER: ...mean anything to me. I am not sure what you mean.

SENATOR HUDKINS: All right. Right now, surface water irrigators do have a compensable right. They have the right to use that water first in time, first in right. If there is a shortage of water and the ground water users are suffering, should they not also be compensated?

SENATOR BEUTLER: Senator, the question of compensation is something that is beyond this bill. The council approached it several times and was unable to address it. My position has been what we need to do now is to take care of the conjunctive use problem. If there are significant groups that are interested in talking about the whole question of compensation and who should be compensated when, that's certainly one I'd be willing to sit down and help organize and look at, but you have some very complicated questions there. Like out in the Upper Republican right now, for example, where they are seeking to control water because of the quantity problems, the amount available to irrigators has been cut down more than half I