

SENATOR SCHELLPEPER: What percent of the irrigators in Nebraska are currently ground water irrigators, do you know?

SENATOR BEUTLER: Senator, a very high percentage. I don't know exactly what it is, 85, 90.

SENATOR SCHELLPEPER: Well, if...

SENATOR BEUTLER: Is that of all irrigators? Is that what you mean, all who irrigate?

SENATOR SCHELLPEPER: Yes, I'm talking all irrigators, 'cause I've never seen that figure. Well, if 85 or 90 percent of them are ground water irrigators, why wouldn't they be involved in this bill and be involved in any future legislation?

SENATOR BEUTLER: Senator...Senator, this bill is overwhelmingly in favor of ground water irrigators the way it is because the ground water irrigators dominate the NRDs, the boards of the NRDs, and the NRDs dominate this process, and so any way you look at it, this process has...gives a lot more weight to ground water irrigators than to surface water irrigators, even the Interrelated Water Committee that's set up to resolve disputes between DWR and the NRDs, that's...that's the majority on that board are from the Natural Resources Commission, which, as you know, is...are people who are generally from the NRDs, on that board, so...

SENATOR SCHELLPEPER: Thank you. Thank you. I guess the problem I have, the NRDs are calling and say support 108, and yet I have irrigators call in and said we don't want the bill. So I don't know how you can say that the ground water irrigators are represented by the NRDs because, well, I'm getting two messages out there. I am getting messages from the irrigators that said this is a bad bill, don't support it, and yet the managers and the board are calling and said it's a good bill. So I think if we would adopt a amendment like this, that would help, so I am going to support the amendment. Senator Dierks, you can have your time back.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Senator Dierks, there's approximately three minutes left.

SENATOR DIERKS: Thank you. I think we can agree that the