

SENATOR DIERKS: Is Senator Elmer here?

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Senator Elmer, would you yield?

SENATOR ELMER: Yes.

SENATOR DIERKS: Owen, can you explain to me what hydrologically connected means?

SENATOR ELMER: Hydrologically connected means that the water source, or the water resource has a common, it is part of a common aquifer. It's, the water is indistinguishable because it is all of one body of water.

SENATOR DIERKS: If LB 108 is passed, who will determine if ground water and surface water are hydrologically connected?

SENATOR ELMER: The NRD, in the case of a dispute, would be required to perform a study to establish if the problem exists, and if it did, to initiate steps to mitigate or alleviate the problem. The study would be conducted by individuals or groups of individuals who the NRDs would expect to have technical expertise in determining the extent of the interrelationship and how widespread the aquifer might be that was affected.

SENATOR DIERKS: Okay. If ground water and surface water in a specific area will somehow interrelate or connect in a hundred years, would that be hydrologically connected under LB 108?

SENATOR ELMER: The immediacy of the problem, you know, you could arguably say, Cap, that every drop of water in the world is interconnected because of the solar cycle. And that's not to the extent that we're carrying. Immediately connected, aquifers like the alluvial plane of a river are those that have immediate impacts. Many of the aquifers, where the water tables are actually higher than the surface of the river do not affect the stream flow other than to contribute in springs. Those that are much lower than an intermittent stream don't have any impact on the stream flow.

SENATOR DIERKS: Thank you. In the past five years, Senator Elmer, there's been a zero percent increase in irrigated acres in Nebraska. Nineteen ninety-four and '95, the past five years,