

are objecting is because they don't want the heavy hand of state government telling them what they can or cannot do. And the information you asked for, if I would be willing to have the NRDs not get it because of striking Section 55, it's already present in the rest of the bill. I mean, Section 55...

SENATOR ELMER: Okay.

SENATOR DIERKS: ...doesn't take that authority away.

SENATOR ELMER: But the point I'm trying to make is, with the absence of any potential conflict from surface water users, in almost any area in the northeast part of the state, I see no...there is absolutely no reason that ground water users...

SPEAKER WITHEM: Time.

SENATOR ELMER: I'll continue this later.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Senator Schellpeper, on the Dierks amendment.

SENATOR SCHELLPEPER: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and members, I rise to support the Dierks amendment. I think that if you don't approve the Dierks amendment, you're really setting up a very, very strong new department with the state. I'm not sure that we need, in this day and age, to set up another massive department that has power to levy taxes. We're talking about property taxes, about reducing property taxes, and now we're going to come in. We're going to approve a bill that will let them raise an additional half-cent levy. Now, I think it's...we're headed the wrong way with this bill. The NRDs are out there. They're doing a good job, I think a very good job in our area. They are controlling it. Why do we want to let a state agency come in and say, you will do this and you will do that? People tell us, get government off of our backs. This bill puts the government right on our back and say, you will shut down, you will not irrigate. We don't need that. I think if you talk to the average irrigator, the average person that is out there on the farm, they don't want this bill. It's the people that want more power that want this bill. It's not a bill that is popular at all with the average farmer. Yesterday I went and visited with some people at the Pork Producers. They weren't interested...all they wanted to just talk about was the water bill, they didn't care about pork prices. They wanted to