

you suggested that maybe the NRDs weren't able to deal with the decline in water, ground water levels, but that's not true either. They can. They do a very effective job of that. They can do this right now. They don't need 108 to do it, and they especially don't need Department of Water Resources to tell them to do it because it can be happening currently. I still have difficulties with understanding the need for the urgency of this legislation because I think if this is such good stuff we'll get to it. Currently, the amendment that I offered you would have left in place the instream flow problems that people had with Game and Parks. It would have left in place the ground water issue and would have kept in place the conjunctive water use which is a great concession I think on my part because I don't even like that part of it. But I still have trouble figuring out the compelling need for this legislation. I just don't think it's there. We have the ability right now with our NRDs...

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: One minute.

SENATOR DIERKS: ...to take care of all the problems we have. We don't have to embellish their needs with state oversight. They can do it correctly now. I think it's a step in the wrong direction to provide all this bureaucracy, and I was hoping that you would see that same thing. But evidently, there seems to be a need here in the body to increase the bureaucracy by three more people and \$100,000 which is just a chink in the law and it will be better than that, more than that years down the road because this is just a foot in the door. I would hope that you could see that, see the error of that before we go voting on this piece of legislation. And I will, of course, at this time support Senator Hudkins' amendment; and I'm glad that the Natural Resources Committee has decided to do the same thing. Thank you.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Thank you, Senator Dierks. Senator Schellpeper.

SENATOR SCHELLPEPER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members. I rise also to support the Hudkins amendment. One of my concerns was always that with property taxes being in the forefront here this afternoon is that allowing some agency to have this increase in this tax rate is the wrong message to send at this time. And so I think this amendment is a very good amendment