

and those people who know those areas best are the NRDs in that area, and they are the ones who are charged with making a plan specific to the users in their area. They are the ones charged with the job of fairness as between different users, where there are conflicts with users. They're the ones we ask to look at the situation and not follow any strict rules that would attempt to micromanage how they handle a particular situation, but rather to give them the flexibility that history has shown us they deserve to have. I say that because, by and large, the NRDs have worked well, have made good decisions, have done management where it's been necessary to do management, and with rare exceptions, have handled situations with good judgement and with consideration for the undesirability of government intrusion in any particular situation. When you talk about base flows and whether they should be increased or decreased above a specific amount, then you're talking about hard and fast rules. And sometimes what you're actually attempting to do is to increase certain base flows and to say that they should not be increased defeats the whole purpose...may defeat the whole purpose of an individual joint-action plan. And so, I think that the language of the bill is clear, that it gives the NRDs authority to work in this area. Again, there's no reason why an NRD, in any situation, would ever feel inclined because of its political structure to favor a surface water user over a ground water user. Everything indicates that the bill is properly structured in its balances in this particular regard, and that this particular amendment would work against that balance and would, in fact, put some management, micromanaging, into the NRD system that is not appropriate or suggested by their experience. Thank you.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Senator Dierks, followed by Senators Schellpeper and Elmer.

SENATOR DIERKS: May I ask Senator Elmer a question, please, Mr. Speaker?

SPEAKER WITHEM: Senator Elmer, Senator Dierks has a question. Would you care to respond?

SENATOR ELMER: Be glad to.

SENATOR DIERKS: Senator Elmer, with this amendment, we are providing a little more protection for ground water users. Do