

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office

February 12, 1999 LB 92

Act, they are done in series of ten. Each of the first ten is charged the full fee, then after that the group of ten is just charged one fee. The fee that is charged, the first \$30 goes to the Department of Water Resources, and then on to the General Fund. The second part of the fee, which is determined by rules and regulations goes to the Water Well Standards and Contractors' Licensing Act, which is responsible for testing, credentialing, and site. The...what this does is allow irrigation wells now to be considered a series of wells. Typically, this hasn't had to be done before, because usually you can get enough production out of one well. Typically, they will do between 800 to 1,000 gallons per minute, and so a farmer then, typically, has just one well, because wells are not cheap to put in. When you have a well that goes down to 250, to up to 350 feet, that is around a 15,000 dollar cost, and so this is something that they don't do unless they absolutely need it for their plot of land. What has happened in some areas is that there is a concern about the number of shallow wells that are having to be put in. The aquifer, while it's in excellent condition, is shallow and will not...one well will not yield adequate water to provide for the production of that plot of land. What this will do is it will allow irrigation wells, after the first one, to now be considered in a series of wells, consistent with the series of wells concept that is used in the other statutes. There are safeguards to this. The cost alone is probably one of the first built in safeguards. Secondly, it is for irrigation wells only. It cannot be used for stock tanks, dams, any of that thing. What we also do is we define common carrier, as found in Section 1, subsection (2) of the bill, and determines how the water must be carried. Also there is a limited time frame and, again, it has to be used just on the same plot of land. So what this would do, this bill would allow irrigation wells, when more than one have to be drilled, a full fee for the first series, then grouped and charged on that afterwards. What has happened in one of the counties, in the Central Platte NRD District, is that some of the farmers are having a production rate of about 60 to 80 gallons per minute, which, obviously, is not the same as 800 to 1,000 gallons. So what they are having to do is drill a series of wells, sometimes six, sometimes up to twenty wells, to come up with the amount of water they need to irrigate that single plot of land. And so, for that reason, we have requested that irrigation wells in a