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looking at merging agencies to add efficiency, particularly in the future. Thank you.

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: Senator Beutler.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Senator Kristensen, members of the Legislature, Senator Schrock, if I could explore a little bit with you one portion of the committee amendments. And the portion of the committee amendments, most all of which I don't have any problem with, but there is one section that I would like to discuss in some detail so that I can get a sense of what's happening. But, as I understand it, on the last part of the committee amendments, the changes to Section 176, the general law has been that if you dig a ground water well within 50 feet of a river, you have to go get a permit, on the theory that those waters are interrelated and you may well be taking surface water by that act of drilling within 50 feet. That's the current law, is it not?

SENATOR SCHROCK: That is correct, Senator Beutler.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Okay. And under this particular amendment you seem to be saying that wells that were dug within 50 feet of the river bank, after the cutoff date, when we originally made this law, are going to be allowed to the extent that they're operative before the effective date of this act. In other words, you seem to be grandfathering in another seven years' worth of wells that may be in violation of this...of this rule. Is that accurate, and can you describe the reason why?

SENATOR SCHROCK: Senator Beutler, Senator Beutler, if I can respond, and I should have been clear in my opening statement. We have a problem because these wells that we're grandfathering in may or may not be within 50 foot of a channel. But the trouble is we have islands, and this is called the island amendment, if you may, if you are with me. And we have islands out there that are 20 miles long, two and three miles wide, and one that comes most notably to our attention was the Brady Island, between the community of Gothenburg and North Platte. And there are wells dug on that island that are certainly further than 50 foot away from the stream but, because of the definition in the law, they are...they are...they were