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FLOOR DEBATE

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install some dewatering wells to allow construction at their wastewater treatment plant, and these were to be in place approximately six months. Legally the NRD could not permit those wells. Ground water quality is the responsibility of the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality and the natural resource districts, yet the current wording in the statute places these agencies in disagreement. So really what we're doing is trying to bring some agreement to the statute, and as it was noted that, earlier, sometimes when laws become changed and intermingled that the statute is not always cleared up. With that, I turn my time back to the Chair. Thank you.

SENATOR ENGEL: Thank you, Senator Stuhr. The Chair recognizes Senator Raikes.

SENATOR RAIKES: Thank you, Senator Engel, members of the Legislature. Senator Schrock, I'm going to ask you a question, and probably you can dispose of this quickly. With that language stricken, I'm wondering if this would, in effect, create an extra hurdle for someone who was interested in establishing a livestock operation. Would this mean now that if someone wanted to develop a cattle feedlot or a hog operation, whatever it might be, that they would now need to get the approval, if they needed a well, they would need to get the approval of the NRD in addition to whatever other approval they needed?

SENATOR SCHROCK: Senator Raikes, in response to that, I want to clarify something earlier. There has been some confusion on my part, and so I want to clear it. This would apply only to ground water management areas. It's my understanding you can drill a well anywhere you want to now for any purpose you want to, but there are the three priorities established by the Department of Natural Resources. Agriculture...I think domestic is first, agriculture is second, and commercial-industrial is third, and municipal would be included as domestic. Right now if you are in a ground water management area and you drill a well that is over 50 gallons, then you have to get a permit from the NRDs, and that would apply to water wells for livestock facilities. If you are going to build a rather large livestock facility, whether it be hogs, cattle, or whatever, and your well