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FLOOR DEBATE

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contract with any corporation for the purpose of developing, establishing, and implementing storm water management programs or projects. A contract is payable from the proceeds of the special levy. Section 6 authorizes the natural resource district to levy up to an additional 1 cent for developing, establishing, and implementing storm water management programs and projects in cooperation with other public entities. Section 7 allows the cities and any natural resource districts encompassing any such city to cooperate with each other with counties and other public agencies in the development, establishment, and implementation of storm water management projects and programs. Section 8 is the harmonizing provision, Section 9 is the severability clause, and Section 10 is the repealer clause. I would remind you that this is a federal mandate. And maybe it's not something we want to do. I would argue it's something we should do. For your information, the metropolitan area of Omaha paves or in some form or another adds an additional three square miles of impervious surface every year. That means in the last 20 years we have 60 new square miles in Douglas and Sarpy County that is not soaking up rain water or runoff water. It just runs off. In Lincoln, it's almost two square miles every year. This is something I think we need to do. The original bill that came out of committee based the fees on impervious surface. This was objected to by hotel owners, motel owners, car dealers, shopping malls, and we got a lot of opposition to that. And the thing we heard was, put it on property taxes. We came up with an amendment earlier this session that would have charged fees. If you were a homeowner, you would have paid a certain fee; if you were a commercial enterprise, depending on the size, you would have paid a fee. That did not seem to meet with approval either. So this proposal would put it on property. I would remind you, no property taxes would be increased without the approval and the implementation of this by the city councils and mayors of our municipalities and the NRDs. And so they don't have to do this. This is just allowing them to do that. It's permissive legislation. Will they do it? I think they will have to. Will they go to the 5 cents and will the cities go to the 5 cents and the NRDs go to a penny? No, I don't think they will. But they need that flexibility because Omaha and Lincoln probably don't...probably they don't need that much spending authority.