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FLOOR DEBATE

March 2, 2004 LB 830, 831, 833, 962, 1172, 1173

the present level of development and the fully appropriated level of development in that basin. Now, Elm Creek was not used because that was my mailing address. Elm Creek was used because that is where the last canal siphons off surface water in the Platte River Basin. LB 962 also incorporates the provisions of five other bills. LB 830 was a cleanup bill for the Department of Health. LB 831 allows the withdrawal of water from a reservoir for the watering of range livestock without first obtaining a permit from the department. LB 833 allows the Water Task Force to meet at least twice a year. In other words, we're going to continue the work of the task force, and they can meet twice a year instead of four times a year. It allows the Governor to appoint members to serve in the place of existing members who can no longer serve, for whatever reason. And one of the meetings I want the Water Task Force to do this spring or summer is to go into the western part of the state and probably into Wyoming and see what is going on between surface water and ground water users in that part of the state, and to see what kind of supply there is. A lot of the members of the task force are from the central part of the state where there is not much surface water irrigation, and so we want kind of an educational process meeting for this probably some time in May or June. LB 1172 requires a natural resource district to approve a transfer of water for municipal purposes, even if the district has temporarily suspended the drilling of new wells or transfers of water from outside area to inside the area. The municipal water suppliers must have first obtained a permit from the department under the Municipal, Rural and Domestic Ground Water Transfer Act. And I would say Senator Erdman is bringing us an amendment which would further strengthen the cause of municipalities in this state. And there's been some controversy out in the western part of the state, particular with Sidney, and that's probably an unfortunate case because there's a case where, if people would try to work together instead of throwing rocks at each other, they could have resolved that a long time ago. And the last bill amended, this is LB 1173, provides protection from encroachment for a proposed municipal well field. In other words, if a municipality drills a well in an area and has to transfer that water in the municipality, then somebody can't drill an irrigation well within 1,000 feet of that new municipal well. I have handouts. As you can see, the