

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

March 2, 2004

LB 962

NRDs and the Department of Natural Resources, there will be a board, an...

SENATOR JANSSEN: Time.

SENATOR STUHR: ...Interrelated Water Review Board, five members that will help in meeting those decisions. So there is a lot of detail...

SENATOR JANSSEN: Time, Senator.

SENATOR STUHR: ...in the bill. Thank you.

SENATOR JANSSEN: Thank you, Senator Stuhr. Senator Bourne, you are recognized.

SENATOR BOURNE: Thank you, Mr. President, members. I started reading the committee amendment yesterday on this bill and, quite honestly, Senator Schrock, I got through about ten pages and I thought, this is beyond me. I'm not so much concerned about what you're trying to do as it relates to regulating water. I understand how important that is. What I'm concerned about is the fiscal impact of the bill, and some subsequent amendments that raise property taxes to fund it. And I'm going to listen to the debate. I realize how important this is, but I'm really...I'm really concerned with the state of our budget. As you are aware, the Forecasting Board downgraded our projections on Friday by \$100 million, so all of a sudden we're dealing with about a \$325 million deficit. This bill, as I read the fiscal note, and I can't tell if the fiscal note is for the committee amendment or the bill, as it is, but \$2.5 million General Fund expenditure in 2004-2005, \$4.7 million expenditure in 2005-2006. It appears to me that then that will be an ongoing expenditure. Then the next amendment down, or actually the next to the next, looks like there's a penny tax increase, property tax increase. Gives NRDs an additional 1 cent levy authority to fund this, and I don't know if that makes the General Fund appropriation go away, or if that's in addition to that. But I think we need to look at the bigger picture. You all realize that the general...or the Forecasting Board downgraded the projections by, I think it was, \$104 million. I am really