

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

March 2, 2004

LB 962

face when they can increase the value of land, because that means they have more resources to tax. And then you put the center-pivot on, and you put the irrigation motor on, and the equipment to withdraw the water from the ground, and that gets taxed. And we are the only state in this area that I know of that taxes personal property. Senator Beutler, a fee probably is appropriate. But in light of the fact of what we involved in irrigated agriculture pay compared to states around us, we pay a tremendous price for this irrigated land on taxes, and then we also pay for the machinery that irrigates the land, which is not done in other states. If you remove personal property tax, I'll get along with you all day on a fee. But first of all let's get away...let's do away with the personal property tax, like the rest of the states, and then we can talk about a water fee. But until that happens, I'm sorry, I'll have to resist that. Senator Mines, you can have the rest of your times back.

SPEAKER BROMM: Senator Mines, you have 2 minutes and 45 seconds.

SENATOR MINES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Senator Schrock. The last thing I want to do is present this as a urban-rural example of not getting along or playing nice. And I do have a basic sense that this is important for the state. It is truly a statewide concern. But I think I need to echo some comments by Senator Chambers, that the committee is made up almost wholly of those that appear to have a vested interest in this process. And one could say it looks like the committee is stacked with irrigators and those that have a direct interest. That's not to say it's not well-meaning, it's not to say that those aren't the right people to have on it, but just a point of interest. And it's...I'm here at the eleventh hour saying that maybe the committee should have included those in urban areas, or those that don't...wouldn't have direct benefit, should have been part of this process. The real reason I wanted to stand up...and it's not with deference to this bill. As the bombshell was dropped last Friday, and this state faces an ever increasing shortfall in revenue, this process that we use to advance legislation doesn't allow us to prioritize. And this is...just happens to be an example, a more than \$4 million example of, is this a good idea in light of what we'll face in a few weeks?