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FLOOR DEBATE

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LB 962

SENATOR LOUDEN: The natural resources districts all already levy a tax to take care of a lot of that. A lot of the resources districts have already put in flow meters on their irrigation wells in their area, and there will be more to be put on. Most of those flow meters in areas, the farmer, the landowner, has to either cost share or some of them pay for all of it. So I think we're worrying about a lot of...worrying about something we don't need to worry about when we start worrying about costs. I think the problem right now is to decide if we're going to extend the surface water rights to some of the people that can't use it. Thank you.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Louden. (Visitors introduced.) Members, it gets a little "buzzy" at times, so if you would, with (inaudible) members, appreciate it if you kept the buzz down a little bit. Thank you. On with discussion of the Chambers amendment, Senator Schrock.

SENATOR SCHROCK: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, I want to respond to what Senator Beutler had to say about fees. I envision...let's put it this way. I don't envision large quantities of state funds being used to retire irrigated acres. I don't think that should be a function of state government. I don't think it should be a function of our General Fund, and that's an endless pit. When there is acres, when there is an overappropriated situation, I do believe that people should share the shortage. And I think in the Republican Basin, we're going to see some pretty good shortages if we don't have a turnaround in our moisture situation. But I don't think state funds, General Funds, should be used to retire irrigated acres. Now, if an NRD would come to us in the future and want fees, or fees on irrigated acres, or fees on wells to start a fund to retire acres, I could go along with that. But that hasn't happened yet. But I don't think the state should be involved in the huge expense that it could be involved in retiring irrigated acres. When there's too much...when the basin is overappropriated, then I think the irrigators in that basin or that NRD should share the shortage. So, this \$2.5 million that's being asked for, for more research, mapping, coordinating, finding out what's happening and where we need to