

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

March 17, 2004 LB 962

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Schrock. You've heard the opening on FA1514. Open for discussion. There were several lights on. Senator Janssen, did you wish to...?

SENATOR JANSSEN: Thank you, Senator Cudaback, members of the Legislature. We were talking on the last amendment about the funding and so on. Where are the dollars going to come from? We all know that we are in a pretty tight pinch right now, and it's going to be that way for the next few years. But yet, we stand on this floor and ignore some of the avenues that we could be, we could be pursuing to help in situations like this. Water is one of our most important natural resources that this state has. It's probably the number one resource that this state has. And yes, we want to keep it clean. We want our environment to be great, but sometimes that takes dollars. And if we're going to go back and, as Senator Bourne had talked about, putting another cent on the natural resources districts, allow them to recapture more dollars to help on all these situations with water, what do you hear the most concern about in this state? It's property taxes. And folks, that's property taxes when the NRDs are able to levy a tax. No one thinks about other avenues we could follow. And I think you all know what I'm talking about. Those are voluntary taxes that people pay. People like to have a good time. They don't think about spending a few extra dollars on a steak. How many of you have seen the price of a hunk of sirloin or a T-bone go up at your restaurant? You still go. That's entertainment. People don't worry about that. Some people are addicted to a lot of things, and one of them is food. They go out and they'll eat out and say, oh my, I'm getting heavy. Hey, that is their prerogative. The...and the same thing goes with what we've been trying for the last four years to push through this Legislature. Do you realize how many dollars slip away from this state? The state of Illinois, I just heard this morning, had room for one more casino, so they decided, well, we'll auction that off. They thought they'd raise \$150 million. Folks, they raised \$500 million. That would go a long way to fund this water situation, wouldn't it? I wanted to bring this to your attention. Rather than having your property taxes go up, think about that for a little bit. There's an untouched resource out there for funding. I know this will upset some of you but, ladies and gentlemen, I've been