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FLOOR DEBATE

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salary was increased. Her salary is in line with those of comparable...of agencies who control that amount of funding. On that board is the Director of Agriculture, the Director of Natural Resources, the Director of Environmental Quality, and I think one other director. Do you think these state directors are going to give her a salary that's out of line? I think that innuendo is completely unjustified. Furthermore, it's unjustified to suggest that they have some kind of oversized staff. They have two, maybe three people. They have a grant program that spreads out money across the state to municipalities, to counties, and especially to NRDs. It is, in a sense, an aid to political subdivisions that they would sorely miss, especially the NRDs. During the 2002 special session, we took \$2.5 million out of the Environmental Trust to help out with other things that were not related to the environment. Besides that \$2.5 million, within the grant program, a whole bunch of other money was going out to things that you and I have dictated in this Legislature as necessary. For example, the Water Policy Task Force that brought to you LB 962 was mostly funded out of the Environmental Trust. Studies in the Republican River Basin, working with the NRDs, have been funded out of the Environmental Trust. Studies in the Platte Valley Basin have been funded out of the Environmental Trust. Education is a part of the Environmental Trust, Senator Bourne. Lots of the projects are related to schools and education projects in the area of the environment and related areas. \$2.5 million in the 2002 special session; another \$225 million for the low-level radioactive waste lawsuit was taken out at that point in time. In the August 2002 special session, \$2.7 million was taken out of the trust; 2003 regular session, \$925,000 was taken out of the Environmental Trust; 2003 regular session, 925. A lot of money has been taken out of the Environmental Trust. And even with that money taken out, within its grant process it gives out a lot more money for things that you have indicated on this floor are important. And now you want to take money out of...and give it to LB 962. And I'll tell you what really sticks in my craw. A large percentage of the money that's going to be spent implementing LB 962 will be spent to buy out water rights that should never have been given out in the first instance. It is the neglect of this Legislature and our policy makers that are now causing a bunch