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FLOOR DEBATE

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of money to be spent buying out water rights, and it should never have happened. And that's not an environmental purpose. If you're buying out one farmer's right for the second...so the second farmer has enough water to plant a corn crop, that's not an environmental purpose. It's a pure proprietary, economic purpose.

SENATOR CUDABACK: One minute.

SENATOR BEUTLER: And it's a purpose we never should have gotten ourselves into. Thank you.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Beutler. (Visitors introduced.) On with discussion, Senator Schrock.

SENATOR SCHROCK: Mr. President, I'm not quite sure what to say here, but I do want to respond a little bit. Senator Beutler, I don't think there's been one dollar of tax money used at the present time to buy out any water rights. What's going to happen in the future I don't know. I don't "envisualize" using that money to buy out water rights. There's that potential there, and I think we need to guard that. If there is going to be funds to buy out water rights, I think that's the function of the NRD, and that could be the function of a water tax. But I would envision that to be a NRD issue, not a state issue. I know there's the potential there. I won't deny that. I will say that the Environmental Trust Fund has funded a lot of the valuable water issues that we have been dealing with. And I do appreciate that. And I don't like the fact that we have taken money from them. But I do think that it's appropriate to go and ask for grants from them. Now whether I or you will prevail on this this year I don't know. I do believe that LB 962 is important enough that we need to have...find the funds one way or the other. And you and I can make deals, but if there's 40 other...47 other people that don't agree with this, then we have a problem. So I just want to...I'm trying to get the information sent up to me on what money has been taken away from the Environmental Trust. And it has been substantial. And I think one year we took almost everything. But I'm trying to get that information, and maybe you have it. If you do, why, I'll give the rest of my time to you, Senator Beutler.