

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

May 4, 2005

LB 424

SENATOR JANSSEN: Time. Thank you, Senator Chambers. Senator Beutler.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Senator Janssen and members of the Legislature, as Senator Chambers well knows, I have some sympathy with him with regard to the Women's Commission but...and I appreciate the tools that he uses in order to try to get us to think about the Women's Commission. But I want to suggest that this particular tool and this particular device is not particularly related to the problems that he has discussed. In fact, I think the Game and Parks Commission has reached out to women and tried to keep their programs very minimal in terms of fees. But what should be stressed is that the Game and Parks Commission works with many, many organizations around the state, and the things that they work on are very much related to the practical side of life, even though they're oriented towards the long-term protection of the environment and habitat and the basic priorities of the commission as those priorities coalesce with the priorities of the Environmental Trust. But keep in mind now that we're dealing with a settlement with the states of Wyoming and Colorado on the water in the Platte Valley system. That agreement involves the federal government. That agreement involves, in a large way, wildlife interests, whether you like it or not. Whether you're a farmer or rancher or an urban environmentalist, the national consensus is that wildlife is going to be protected in certain ways and ultimately we're going to protect them with General Funds or we're going to protect them with other funds. And the Game and Parks Commission has taken a lead role with some of the NRDs, with some of the very practical rural interests in outstate to put together programs that have more than one effect, that have the effect of protecting wildlife but, at the same time, in some instances preclude the use of water, which is good for solving our water disputes, and puts aside land for habitat, which helps us in our negotiations over the use of the Platte River with other states. In the Republican Basin, the Environmental Trust and Game and Parks have worked on other habitat programs that have the effect, and will have the effect in the future, of facilitating the Republican River agreement not to use water above a certain amount. Game and Parks is our only large institution staffed to deal with these kinds of problems that can put together projects