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FLOOR DEBATE

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practical as to not to do something immediate when things could happen on their own in a year or two. We're going to get heavy rains again; we always have. We don't have the drought that we had in the thirties. It's going to turn around. And we're getting closer to it turning around every year because we have so many years of drought. So those are my comments. Return the rest of my time back to the Chair. Thank you.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Senator Stuthman. Senator Beutler, followed by Senator Kopplin and others.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Senator Cudaback, members of the Legislature, I, first of all, really appreciate the fact that people are engaging in this discussion, and there have been a number of very interesting comments and worthwhile comments and relevant comments, all of which deserve discussion on their own. By and large, I'm going to ignore them for the moment, because I want to go back and just, for those of you who aren't...haven't been around water for a long time or are from the city like I am, go back again through some of the fundamentals of what has happened in recent history. Let me say, though, in response to a couple of comments that were made, that yes, this amendment is for discussion only, but only in the sense that the timing of it on this bill is not good. It is not for discussion only, in my opinion. I'm going to ask you to vote on it at some point in time as an element, hopefully, of a broader solution. What I'm trying very much to encourage is a package this year that contains some of those compromises that we all know need to be made. And I will argue, and I'll try to give you more of an idea why as we speak this morning, but I would argue that this particular element should be a part of a plan. The Lower Republican NRD, and this is the last thing I'm going to say before I back up again, the Lower Republican NRD, when it decided to set the number of inches that would be allowable to irrigators this year, made absolutely no distinction between those irrigators who had invested a long time ago and those irrigators who put wells down after January 1, 2001. And we'll get to why that date is important. They made no distinction between those groups, even though those several hundred people who put wells down, when they knew we had a problem, actually were jeopardizing the investment of all of the others who