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FLOOR DEBATE

February 1, 2006 LB 975

same or substantially similar operating requirements as the requirement that existed on January 1, 2004. So they have to maintain their operation in requirement to the existing permit that they've had. They cannot fall outside of compliance with the permit that they've had.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Well, yes, they can. They can continue to operate. They don't even have to apply for a permit until 2007, and at that time they certify that the operation is in compliance, and they could have brought it into compliance just before they apply. But I won't...I won't belabor it. I will wait till another day. Thank you, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT SHEEHY: Thank you, Senator Chambers. Senator Beutler, this is your third time on advance LB 975.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Mr. Lieutenant Governor, just a couple last comments on fees, on livestock fees and water fees. I thought it was interesting, and it should be that you might be interested in knowing how this fee with the cattlemen work, how the fee system works. It's an annual per-head fee and it's different based on different kinds of livestock. But here's the interesting part that I had not related to you. It says that starting a year from now the department will annually review and adjust the fee structure to ensure that fees are adequate to meet 20 percent of the program costs. So here's a fee program that makes a lot of sense. If, over the years, the cost of regulation goes up, then in that event the fees will go up so that it costs 20 percent of the program. If you did a similar kind of fee for irrigators, we could take care of our problem. We could take care of our problem. There wouldn't be any question about General Funds. There would be enough money from that kind of a fee, levied at a reasonable rate, that it would provide adequate funds to ensure that with regard to the Republican...and remember we have to think of the Platte as well as the Republican, because the Platte is coming along. That agreement will be in place before too long, and that agreement, just as in the Republican, will require us to abide by certain limitations. And just as in the Republican, we may be overusing the water right now. So we need to get in place a system that can apply to the Republican but also can apply to the Platte