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FLOOR DEBATE

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other one is the Frenchman District which runs right past basically where I live, a few miles away. They're going to step up. Our local NRD in the Middle Republican has pledged some money, what they had available, to work with Frenchman, I believe, within the Middle Republican. But change is difficult. But my long-term solution...and I'm concerned. There's been so many of us in this Legislature work so many days, weeks, months on this issue, Senator Schrock and Senator Beutler. I can't name all of us, there's been a lot of us working. It seems like, looking around, a lot of us are term limited out. My pledge would be to go home, maybe it's good for term limits. I might not get reelected if I have such an unpopular stand on water, but we're going to have to retire some of these surface water irrigation districts. They haven't been used for a number of years, they're in disrepair, could be brought back into use if we had the water. But long term, with all the conservation measures we've taken, I don't see the runoff-fed reservoirs in western Nebraska filling again. I just, I don't see that happening. So my pledge would be to go back, work with the irrigation districts. We have some movement now. We have an example what Bostwick has done. We also have Riverside and Frenchman now talking. They don't have a lot of acre feet, but it's an indication to me that we are making progress. We're going to have to retire some of these surface water irrigation districts permanently. One of the other factors that enters in, and I don't know how many people realize this, but there are facility costs assessed to each one of those irrigated acres by the Bureau of Reclamation. And the bureau has been most helpful. They've reduced those annual fees because there was simply no water to deliver. They've reduced them. They have not eliminated them to the best of my knowledge, but they are working with us on this. So that, to me, is what we're going to have to do. Again, change is difficult. These have been passed down, these farms, through generations with surface water. Times have changed. Farming practices have changed and obviously climate, the condition of the rainfall has not helped. But I am going to try and go back and work with local irrigation districts that I know the directors on and so on and see what we can get done because I've always maintained we can't depend on someone else to bail us out of this. It's going to be done from within the basin. Thank you, Senator Cudaback.