

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

March 28, 2006 LB 1226

Matter of fact, I think it's a deal breaker. I think the issues are just as urgent for our cities and municipalities when it comes to storm water as they are for our irrigators and our natural resources, as that pertains to our rivers and our streams and our reservoirs. So I would encourage you to stay with the committee amendment, which I would say was supported by six or seven, at least, of the committee members--seven of the committee members--and let's move forward. Let's do something positive for water. LB 962, without some funding, doesn't work very well, and sure, you can put a fee on irrigators, you can put a bigger tax on irrigators, and we are proposing that those people in the overappropriated basin have more levy authority, thanks to the Revenue Committee. But if we don't fund these things, and we don't get involved, we're not going to solve any of these issues. And so, Senator Langemeier, I do oppose your amendment, and it pains me to bring the amendment to cut the funding for both programs, but I think we need to move forward at some point in time. But like I said, after you get through with healthcare and education issues, there's nothing left for natural resources, and they're important. Where would we be without water in this state? And that's what I'm trying to get through. Thank you.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Schrock. Senator Erdman. Senator Erdman waives his time. Senator Mines.

SENATOR MINES: Thank you, Mr. President, colleagues. This will be brief. I do support Senator Langemeier's amendment in principle. I believe that storm water runoff is a local decision, is a local responsibility. It's not a responsibility of the state of Nebraska, and we have talked in the last three years of different mechanisms and methodologies in funding. How do we fund...how do we help local municipalities fund storm water runoff? And in fact, we've talked about a special fee, allotment, or we allow a special fee, and that approach happens to be smoke and mirrors. You're merely shifting the responsibility from property tax over to a special fee that, oh, by the way, happens to be paid by local residents anyway. In this particular instance, we're talking about state allocations, state funding, and again, I don't believe that local storm water runoff is a state issue. I know that the EPA has provisions,