

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

April 3, 2006

LR 259

Preister.

SENATOR PREISTER: Thank you, Honorable President, friends all. I support Senator Chambers' amendment and what he's attempting to do. As I hear some of the discussion about, we're not protecting education, therefore we shouldn't protect the Environmental Trust Fund monies, it reminds me of someone who has two children, and one child is in harm's way, and maybe the other is potentially in harm's way. So would a parent say, I'm not going to protect either child? The parent might protect one, but a parent is going to protect both. So instead of saying, just because we're not protecting the education funds we shouldn't protect the environmental funds, let's protect both of them. I don't have a problem with that. But to use the argument that we should do them both equally, I can buy if we're protecting both. But I think we do need to protect these Environmental Trust funds. We have taken money, and I think somewhat inappropriately, from the funds. Some of the ones that we've done, in 2002, we took over \$2.5 million out of the fund for the Interstate Water Rights Cash Fund. Those were for legal fees, legal fees on the Republican River. That's kind of a stretch to say that these are innovative environmental monies that we're using it for. Legal fees, I don't think that was the original intent. Also in 2002, we took over a quarter of a million dollars for the low-level radioactive waste legal fees funds. Again, legal fees are not the environment. In 2003, we took almost \$1 million for the Platte River cooperative agreement. Again, those weren't innovative kinds of environmental programs, recycling programs, educational programs, the kinds of programs that the voters said they wanted when they voted for the lottery initially. In '04, we took additional funds for the Water Policy Task Force. Then this year, 2006, we're appropriating \$2.75 million for UNL's Mead cleanup fund site. That \$2.75 million for cleanup, again, is not the original intent of what these monies were intended to do. This was not supposed to be money for cleanup or remediation. Remediation and cleanup is supposed to be coming from the responsible party and those who caused the damage. But here we are, taking money for inappropriate water use, for legal fees, and for legal fees for radioactive waste funds, and for dealing with environmental contamination. When the voters voted