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LB 971, 1226

map you handed out. I believe that the Republican River Basin needs more levy authority so they can solve their own problems without coming to the Legislature for money. This will help in that. There's an argument that it isn't enough, but I think it does help. The Upper Republican is the only one of the three that's up against their levy limit now. I suspect the North Platte and the South Platte NRDs will use this levy authority. I suspect that the Upper Niobrara White, which is most of Senator Louden's district, probably will not use that because they don't have too many downstream issues. But the Revenue Committee did pass this out of committee and we amended it onto LB 1126 (sic). And I will also tell you that the Water Policy Task Force, which is made up predominantly of farmers and people with irrigation interest, recommended that we increase the levy authority in the fully and overappropriated basins by 3 cents, or I should say just the overappropriated basins. So we've got the Republican River Basin, the Platte River Basin above Elm Creek that probably need more levy authority so they can solve their own problems without coming to the Legislature. This is just a three-year program. It does sunset after three years, and I think in two or three years the body is going to have to make a decision as to whether to continue this or not. I ask you to vote against the Louden amendment.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Schrock. Further discussion? Senator Baker, followed by Senator Louden.

SENATOR BAKER: Thank you, President Cudaback and members. I serve on the Revenue Committee and this, quite frankly, was a bill that troubled me. It was LB 971. We narrowed it down. As Senator Schrock had presented it to the committee, it was 3 cents, a continual 3 cents. It was not sunset. And it pains me to have to say I support a property tax, a potential property tax increase here to my own operations, businesses in the district. But we've expected the local NRDs to contribute to solving some of the problems out there in the fully appropriated Republic River Basin. This was the best method we could see fit to do this. But the committee did narrow it down to be 3 cents the first year and 2 cents the following two years, and then sunset so that the NRDs must come back to the Legislature and justify asking to either continue this or change it in some