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LB 971, 1226

sort. So it does sunset in three years. It's only dealing with appropriated and overappropriated basins, so that we've narrowed that down to two. And to demonstrate how it's going to be used, the Middle Republican NRD pledged \$50,000 toward the purchase of water from an irrigation district there in the Middle Republican NRD, so that is our local contribution. That paid for about half of the cost of this water, as I recall, from one irrigation district. If I'm incorrect, somebody, I'm sure, is going to call and make sure they get it straight. But they pledged \$50,000. But as Senator Schrock said, our local NRDs are right at the levy limit. The Upper is at the levy limit, the Middle is close, and the Lower I'm not quite so familiar with, but they...I know they're pushing it. So we needed to allow the local NRDs...and you have to remember these are locally elected boards, residents of the NRDs. They're not going to use this authority without having a demonstrated need, and I'm one of those taxpayers. We'll make sure that they aren't using it inappropriately. But we had to allow the local NRDs some authority to raise some money locally. They're already at the levy cap in most cases out there in the Republican, and this was a method in which to do it. It came out of the Revenue Committee on a 7 affirmative votes, 1 absent and not voting, so it came out 7-0, 1 not there, and you can look at the committee statement. As I said, it's LB 971. There are a whole list of people testifying for this bill. And I realize it's a potential tax increase, but it's one that I have a lot of confidence in our local NRD directors. They're not going to abuse this. They're not going to access 3 cents this first year unless it's needed. But I can show you right now evidence that it will be used appropriately, as witnessed by what the Middle Republican did helping buy some water from surface water irrigators out there. So I am going to stand in opposition to Senator Loudon's amendment, AM2971. Thank you.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Baker. Senator Loudon, followed by Senator Schrock.

SENATOR LOUDEN: Thank you, Senator Cudaback and members. I agree with Senator Baker and I agree with Senator Schrock that something needs to be done with the NRDs because some of them are getting to their levy limits. The question is, do you put