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FLOOR DEBATE

April 5, 2006

LB 1226

SENATOR CUDABACK: The Langemeier amendment was not adopted.

CLERK: Senator Beutler, AM3095. (Legislative Journal pages 1438-1444.)

SENATOR CUDABACK: Senator Beutler, to open.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Senator Cudaback, members of the Legislature, this is the conservation easement concept that I put up before you last time around. And I think...I believe it was misunderstood. And I want to plead with you to put something like this into the law, so the process of bringing land into balance in terms of the water use starts to happen in the Republican Valley. Let me go back and just tell you,...I didn't intend to bring this easement up again, and then there was some information published yesterday that indicated to me again that these tools, including this tool, we have to put into play just as soon as we can. This was an article that appeared in the Journal Star, its headline: ex-DNR chief laments late action on water management. And these were comments made by Roger Patterson out in Kearney yesterday, I believe. And the newspaper article picked up several things indicating that LB 962 should have been passed ten years sooner. I don't want to go into those things. That's all water over the dam. But at the very end of the article...and it's interesting how newspapers work, because a critical, important piece of information that, to my knowledge, has not yet been made public, appeared at the end of that article. It pointed out that in 2003 and 2004, for two years combined, that the analysis by the department indicated that we were 42,000 acre-feet of water short, in terms of what we needed to give to Kansas; 42,000 acre-feet. But then it went on to say, in 2005...and this is information that we have not had in our previous water discussions, the latest figures have now been calculated for 2005, and this is the third year of the five-year accounting period. In 2005, we're another 42,000 acre-feet short. So I...let me be sure I stated this correctly. For 2005, we're 42,000 additional acre-feet short. For 2003 and '04 combined, we were 62,000 acre-feet short. That comes to a total of 104,000 acre-feet of water that we're short, cumulative now, for the first three years of the accounting period. Keep in mind