

Beutler laid out the reasons for the fee, to start with, pretty well, the reason being that surface water appropriators would like to be able to achieve recognition that part of that surface water is actually being used for groundwater recharge, for incidental ground water recharge. We are talking about irrigation districts that are already in operation. We are not talking about new projects. We are talking about an irrigation district that is in operation for the purpose of providing surface water to surface water irrigators. Senator Beutler gave you some figures. He talked about \$17.50 as opposed to 50 cents, but let me remind you that individual who is using underground water is having to pay to pump the water out of the ground. He's got the cost of his own well. He had to drill the well to start with. He had to pay for the cost of the well. He had to pay for all the equipment that went with the well. He has to pay for the motor on the well, and he has to pay for the energy that the well uses. So I would suggest to Senator Beutler that that difference in cost is not nearly as great as what he is trying to portray. Also, the purpose for the 50 cent...one-time 50 cent fee was because there are a number of small irrigation districts who are in danger of having their appropriations reduced drastically because a lot of their surface water irrigators have, in fact, quit using as much of the surface water. Now if we require them to set out the mechanisms in the first part that Senator Beutler related to, that the benefit has to be spelled out and the degree of the benefit, then what we are saying to those small irrigation districts is that they simply, probably will not be able to come up with the funds to go through those mechanisms, hire the hydrologist and so forth to determine the degree. The key is the degree. Under the mechanism of the current...of the 50 cent one-time, if you've got any recharge whatsoever, whether it's been a large amount or a small amount, a 50 cent fee, one-time, all they would have to indicate would be that there has been some groundwater recharge. Under the other mechanism, under the mechanism that Senator Beutler says should be the only mechanism, they have to determine the degree of recharge, and then charge according to that degree. It may be a maximum of 50 cents per acre. It may be a minimum of 10 cents per acre. But they would have to allocate it back down based on the degree of groundwater recharge. The point is that if we really expect LB 198 of a few years ago to work in getting a mechanism in the statutes to allow surface appropriators to protect their appropriation, I think it is