

LEGISLATIVE BILL 251

Approved by the Governor May 3, 1995

Introduced by McKenzie, 34

AN ACT relating to ground water; to provide for certain transfers of ground water as prescribed; to provide procedures for objections; and to provide for rules and regulations.

Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,

Section 1. (1) Any person who withdraws ground water for agricultural purposes, or for any purpose pursuant to a ground water remediation plan as required under the Environmental Protection Act, including the providing of water for domestic purposes, from aquifers located within the State of Nebraska may transfer the use of the ground water off the overlying land if the ground water is put to a reasonable and beneficial use within the State of Nebraska and is used for an agricultural purpose, or for any purpose pursuant to a ground water remediation plan as required under the Environmental Protection Act, including the providing of water for domestic purposes, after transfer, and if such withdrawal, transfer, and use (a) will not significantly adversely affect any other water user, (b) is consistent with all applicable statutes and rules and regulations, and (c) is in the public interest. For purposes of this section, domestic has the same meaning as in section 46-613.

(2) Any affected party may object to the transfer of ground water by filing written objections, specifically stating the grounds for such objection, in the office of the natural resources district containing the land from which the ground water is withdrawn. Upon the filing of such objections or on its own initiative, the natural resources district shall conduct a preliminary investigation to determine if the withdrawal, transfer, and use of ground water is consistent with the requirements of subsection (1) of this section. Following the preliminary investigation, if the district has reason to believe that the withdrawal, transfer, or use may not comply with any rule or regulation of the district, it may utilize its authority under the Nebraska Ground Water Management and Protection Act to prohibit such withdrawal, transfer, or use. If the district has reason to believe that the withdrawal, transfer, and use is consistent with all rules and regulations of the district but may not comply with one or more other requirements of subsection (1) of this section, the district shall request that the Department of Water Resources hold a hearing on such transfer.

(3) At the hearing, all interested persons may appear and present testimony. Agencies or political subdivisions of this state and the appropriate natural resources districts shall offer as evidence any information in their possession which they deem relevant to the purposes of the hearing. After the hearing, if the Director of Water Resources finds that the withdrawal, transfer, or use of ground water is contrary to the requirements of subsection (1) of this section, he or she shall issue a cease and desist order prohibiting the withdrawal and transfer.

(4) The director may adopt and promulgate rules and regulations to carry out this section.