

May 8, 1979

LB 595

PRESIDENT: The Chair recognizes Senator Vickers.

SENATOR VICKERS: Mr. President and members, I rise in support of Senator Kremer's amendment. Senator Hoagland mentions that the urban areas of this state are concerned about their drinking water supplies. I'd like to remind the members of this body that we in the rural areas of this state drink water also. It seems to be that a lot of people seem to think that we like pollute our water, it doesn't concern us, and that upsets me quite a bit. If we're going to talk about water quality and the type of the water that we have, I would suggest to you that it concerns me more than it does somebody living in the middle of an urban area. Not only do I drink the water but so does my livestock. My livelihood depends on the quality of that water. Now water is important to everybody in this state, but if we're going to have any water legislation get through this body, we're talking here about public participation in the plan, and that plan is not going to be set in concrete, the plan is really a misnomer, it's a water process. Anything that does get set in concrete, anything that gets set in the statutes is going to have to go through this body. There are forty-nine members in here and we represent the public. Omaha and Lincoln is well represented in this body. Senator Schmit mentions the Sierra Club, and I think they're represented in this body also, so after this process gets completed, and after we do get some legislation in here, all these people are going to be represented no matter who is on this planning process. I think Senator Kremer has a good idea. I think that the water problem that we have in this state is real, and I certainly agree that the quality needs to be assessed. Out in my part of the state we're pretty concerned about the quantity also. Senator Dworak mentions the minimum stream flows. I'll suggest to you that the Republican River used to be dry about every summer before they put the dams in. Now whenever it goes dry everybody worries about the fish that die in the river, but does anybody ever stop to consider that the fish are still alive down there in the Harlan County Reservoir. There's still water in Swanson Lake that they can go fish in. That's more than they used to have. When it used to be dry it was dry all the way across. It's true we have problems, but those problems as I say are going to have to be solved right here, and if we're not representing the public then we're really in trouble. I certainly do support Senator Kremer in his amendment.

PRESIDENT: The Chair recognizes Senator Wagner.