

SENATOR BEUTLER: Members of the Legislature I would like to oppose the Lamb amendment. The points brought up by Senator Lamb and by Senator Kahle are well taken and were considered by the Public Works Committee and it was the judgment of the Public Works Committee that the balance was on the other side of the argument. Let me point out that I think the main purpose of this particular provision in the bill is to try to preclude the necessity of ever establishing control areas. Right now in the state there are 24 Natural Resource Districts among which I believe that there are only three control areas presently established. A control area is a harsh remedy. The controls that are allowed under a control area are much greater than what is allowed under an NRD without establishing a control area. What we are trying to do with the well spacing requirement in an area that is not controlled is to preclude the necessity of ever having a control area. I think that the concerns brought up by Senator Lamb and Senator Kahle show an utter lack of confidence in local control. One of the best things about this bill from the point of view of most people I think is that we have stuck to local control. We have not changed any of the basic mechanisms for the control of ground water and we have retained the local NRD as the controlling entity. But one of the biggest criticisms of local control and of the NRDs is that they are so close to the heavy political pressure that they are not seizing control of the situation in time to preclude serious drops in ground water levels. If you look at the three control areas that have been established in the state so far, none of the three of those control areas is attempting to maintain groundwater levels at the present level. They have all admitted defeat in that regard because they have established the control area so late and the political pressure is so heavy and the investment is so heavy that they are unable to take the action even necessary to attempt to maintain an even ground water level. They are all on established policies of declined control of decline. They admit that it is going to decline. So what I am saying to you is that already there is heavy political pressure, local control exerts heavy political pressure on the situation. I don't think that you need to worry whether an NRD is going to establish well spacing requirements unnecessarily. They are not. That is just not a practical assertion. You know Senator Lamb brings up the point that perhaps one area will be well developed and another not well developed, that is true. But can't we leave it to local control to make a rational decision? Don't we have confidence in local control that they will make a rational decision in a particular area as to whether or not well spacing is required and is fair? The same with regard to Senator Kahle's comment with regard to expense. Can't we rely on the local districts to take into