

May 5, 1981

LB 184

irrigation development shall be considered a farming purpose and would not allow a loophole for large developers of outside money, of big corporate money, coming down into agriculture from other sources and developing Sandhills land. Now as a realistic approach on water in the State of Nebraska, we have it right here. When we start defining our water law who can and what land that you can specifically put an irrigation well down, you are going to stifle the individual farmer's ability to put a well down much more than you will the large corporation, which has the assets to hire the best attorney to go lay the groundwork out for it. We have the best potential of slowing massive Sandhill development down with this bill of any approach that has been presented to the Nebraska Legislature. When you define it out in any other route by water law, you will stifle the individual farmer out there, even that large family unit more than you will the large corporate structure that comes into the state and wants to exploit our resources without regard to whether those Sandhills are going to blow away ten or twenty years from now. If you want to look at this in perspective, look at the Appalachian region and what happened there where the huge corporations came in and exploited the land. They left a poverty area. They drained the profits out of the state and left an impoverished area, exploited and left to a bunch of people to live off of land that had been exploited to the Nth degree. I urge you to adopt these amendments and pass a reasonable bill that follows our surrounding states that have similar background. All the surrounding states to the north, south and east have corporate farm law. They have recognized the problem and that they have had a heritage of private, and personal ownership system of family farms that they want to protect. The reason we can't get it nationally, by national law, is the fact that you have New York State, California, the Southwest that was originated through Spanish land grants and we need to pass a bill to protect the family farm here in the State of Nebraska. If you let the big corporations own it, then they drain their profits and the small towns dry up. The Independent Business Association polled 77 percent in support of regulating, a year ago, in regulating corporate ownership of land. You now have the opportunity to vote for it. I urge the adoption of the committee or these three amendments which were agreed to by the committee and make it a good detailed perfect bill. Thank you.

SPEAKER MARVEL: The motion is the adoption of the Burrows amendment to LB 184. All in favor of that motion