

have other members, particularly Senator Rod Johnson and Cal Carsten and others, that this Legislature has, over the years, been a leader in attempting to protect not only the quantity but the quality of our groundwater here in the State of Nebraska. I would like to point out that LB 310 is a bill which was drafted by the industry, by the industry in cooperation with state and other officials relative to their own sincere desire to protect the quality of groundwater in this state. This bill would require the licensing of water well contractors and pump installation contractors. It would require the licensing of drilling supervisors and pump installation supervisors who would have to have certificates under the provisions of this bill. In other words, there are four separate procedures whereby there are two groups that are licensed, two groups that are provided with a certificate, the licensing board which is created, which consists of nine members, five of whom would be appointed from the industry, and four that would be representative of government. The term "water well" is defined in Section 12 of the committee amendment, and does not include any excavation that might be made for obtaining or prospecting for oil, natural gas, minerals, or other products mined or quarried. The state government interests in protecting the quality of Nebraska's water, particularly groundwater, will be represented on the licensing board by the Department of Health, the Department of Environmental Control, the Department of Water Resources, and by the Conservation and Survey Division of the University of Nebraska. The Department of Health was designated to assist the new licensing board in administration of activities. DEC and Health will set the standards and with the consent of the licensing board regarding water wells and pumps all drillers and pump installers who are working in the state on January 1, 1986, and the 12 months immediately proceeding that date may apply for and receive a provisional license without examination during the initial five-year licensing period. Thereafter, any such driller or pump installer will be examined and required to maintain license proficiency in the same manner as any other future licensees. The bill also provides for penalties and enforcement standards for failure to be properly licensed when operating within the state, as well as penalties for failure to properly plug abandoned wells and for failure to comply with the standards established for the construction and repair of all water wells in Nebraska. The water well licensing bill is a part of the Nebraska groundwater management protection strategy