

great deal yet about groundwater quality, how to achieve it. There is a need to improve data and evidence and other information concerning groundwater quality. This simply states that as an important consideration when you are establishing a special groundwater quality protection area. There are some other amendments in here which address specifically ways to strengthen the bill and make it more prevention oriented as opposed to an after the fact kind of approach to groundwater quality. I think it is important for us, as a body, to consider that as we evaluate this bill and other bills that come before us. There is plenty of evidence out there to suggest that it is just simply too expensive to clean up groundwater once it's been polluted. It's a one-time resource. It is the most valuable resource, probably, in the entire state and we've been blessed with high quality water and we've done a reasonably good job up to now of protecting it. So it is extremely important that we take a prevention orientation in terms of contamination. If we don't, the alternatives are very limited. But the most likely one is that the taxpayers end up picking up the tab for cleaning up that. I have been unable to achieve any kind of agreement with Senator Schmit. I think this bill has some value and I simply want to make these points. And with that, I will withdraw that amendment. Thank you.

PRESIDENT: Senator Schmit, do you wish to speak on the...oh, I'm sorry. The amendment is withdrawn.

CLERK: Senator, you also have an amendment that is on page 1700, this is AM2619.

PRESIDENT: Senator Scofield.

SENATOR SCOFIELD: Mr. President, members, just to speed things along here this morning, I intend to withdraw 2619 and 2620 and 2621. But I would like to tell you why I brought these to your attention today. We have a problem in this state and that is with knowing how to measure the quality of our water and knowing at what point you come in and take some kind of corrective action. It is a highly controversial issue. It is difficult to determine who should be doing what, and Nebraska is not alone in that. A similar kind of debate is going on at the national level. In fact, I attended a conference in January in Kansas City, and that has been conducted around the country. People are still trying to decide about who should be in charge of what, and what is the proper relationship between the federal government, the state governments, and the local governments. I