

on page 17, I changed the word "shall" to "may". This amendment states that each district, each NRD may develop and implement, by rules and regulations, groundwater quality standards as long as such standards provide the same or a greater level of protection as the standards adopted for such use by any state or federal agencies. The purpose of this amendment is to allow some local decision making on how do you want to go about protecting your groundwater. As Senator Johnson's amendment pointed out, we have quite a diversity of NRDs in this state, quite a diversity in terms of the resources they have to work with, quite a diversity in terms of the personnel they have to work with. We also have a very diverse state in terms of soil types and to various sources of water contamination that are out there. Southeast Nebraska, for instance, has serious problems with nitrate. My part of the state doesn't have much of a problem with that right now. Nevertheless, because of the diversity of the state and the kinds of soils that we must deal with, which very definitely dictate the kinds of pollutions that might occur, it seems to me appropriate to give power to local governments to make decisions and to take action, if they feel that their groundwater quality is seriously threatened. Because, here again, I don't think we're going to be able to pay to clean this stuff up, frankly, ladies and gentlemen, if we just drag our feet and don't take this action. It is unrealistic to think that will happen and the burden will most certainly fall upon the taxpayer at a level that the taxpayer simply can't afford. So the purpose of this is prevention in nature. It places the responsibility locally, where they best know their needs and their concerns, and I think also prevents some of the kind of high-handed action that sometimes you have to deal with with a state agency or a federal agency. This does, however, say that you cannot weaken your standards that are in place already either by federal or state agency with the idea that should somebody, on a local level, wish to do away with all standards, that wouldn't be permissible. So, with that, I would ask your support for the amendment. Thank you.

PRESIDENT: Senator Sieck, do you wish to speak on the amendment?

SENATOR SIECK: Mr. President, members of the body, I thought of something very similar that Senator Scofield was addressing here. I've decided not to because I can see that we need to do a lot of education. As she stated, every NRD is different. And I feel that if we are going to say that we have to follow federal standards or state standards, or something like this, it