

SPEAKER BAACK: Madam President and colleagues, just a question for Senator Elmer. Did you...are you talking about Section 5 of the E & R amendments? Or your amendment reads Section 8. Senator Elmer.

SENATOR ELMER: Senator Baack, it's Section 8 of the Standing Committee amendment which inserts in the bill the water management plan portion.

SPEAKER BAACK: Well, then the E & R amended copy of LB 588, I think that's Section 5,...

SENATOR ELMER: Okay, let's look.

SPEAKER BAACK: ...I believe.

SENATOR ELMER: I would have to look at it a little more closely because there's a lot more in Section 5 than in Section 8 of the Standing Committee amendments. But the intention of the amendment is to leave the Department of Environmental Quality in charge of...formerly in the state water management plan in cooperation with the Department of Water Resources and the Natural Resource Districts.

SPEAKER BAACK: Okay, I will...I will address that. I will stand in opposition to that amendment. I think that it's a mistake for us in this state, as vital as agriculture is to this state, to simply leave them out of the ground water management plan. I don't know why we would want to do that in this state, that we would just totally exclude them from this process, and I think that's what this amendment does. It says that the Department of Ag will have nothing to do with the process of writing the state management plan. And, as I stated earlier, I think that we have to utilize all of the expertise that we have in this state when we develop the state management plan and we...and, to do that, we're going to have to have all the various departments involved. And I think that the Department of Environmental Quality would...would certainly want the input of the Department of Agriculture. There's a certain amount of expertise in that department in dealing with how farmers manage chemicals, how chemicals are used on a farm, that they need that expertise if they're going to write a state management plan. So I think they would welcome that input and not be opposed to it. But it would seem to me that in this case this simply takes the