

you don't have any. And I guess all I'm saying is that for the benefit of the people who, as we go down the road, may find themselves in somewhat similar circumstances that we are in southeast Nebraska, we may decide that transferring 65 million gallons of water is a bigger item than we had realized. I realize that this bill is better with the Wehrbein amendment on it. But I think the way the bill was originally written is much better than what we're doing now, and I would have a problem in supporting the Bernard-Stevens amendment the way it is written at this time. Thank you.

SPEAKER BAACK: Thank you, Senator Vrtiska. Senator Wehrbein, you're next.

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: Yes, Mr. Speaker and members, I, too, am going to oppose Senator Bernard-Stevens' amendment. I have a little problem because I originally was willing to work with LB 79, which is what it was, and the committee amendments came out and were fairly acceptable, except for the issue that I just now amended into it in terms of giving a safety net. The problem I have is it is still quite significantly different than what was proposed from the hearing on LB 79, and what some of the things that the committee did to the bill I think helped it quite a bit. But...and so I...I originally thought that I could support the bill because some of the concerns that I had were taken care of. But I think that this is a much better issue than many of us realize, even what we're trying to do. And I am hesitant to hurry this through. Now perhaps it will take all afternoon and we'll all understand what it is. But, to me, it's a major hurdle of what we are doing. Now ground water, in Nebraska, is different throughout the state. I'm not a geologist so I'm not going to speak to that. But it seems to me 200-acre feet is being taken quite lightly here in lieu of the fact that in the western part of the state there is plenty of water at this point. I would say that 200-acre feet in southeast Nebraska might be the equivalent of millions of acre feet in western Nebraska at this point in time. But we really don't know where we're going. I...I agree with Senator Vrtiska, the...the water is really a premium. I'm on the northern end of an area, we have pretty good water. But as you go south, it tapers off rapidly, and even towns have trouble getting the water they need. And so I'm concerned that 200-acre feet, even over time, may be a significant loss. And what we're saying here is you don't even need a permit up to 200. As you start using this water for these uses, that was one of the reasons