



Hundredth Legislature - First Session - 2007
Introducer's Statement of Intent
LB 701

Chairperson: LeRoy Louden
Committee: Natural Resources
Date of Hearing: February 28, 2007

The following constitutes the reasons for this bill and the purposes which are sought to be accomplished thereby:

Provide a way to guarantee that Nebraska stays in compliance with the Republican River Basin Compact Agreement with Kansas on an annual basis. LB 701 is designed to address the water problem in the Republican River Basin. This version of the bill was introduced February 27 in response to the many comments and suggestions to the original version of the bill. This version does not have a Basin Administration Committee, any water transfer language, or property taxes. It has funding matching the Governor's suggested amount, an equal groundwater allocation for both those close to and far from the stream, and a division of responsibility according to the cause of depletions to the stream.

Compliance on an annual basis is assured by requiring the elimination of any overage as soon as it is quantified by the Republican River Compact Administration. This is accomplished by allowing groundwater users between 50% and 70% of the water needed to raise a crop and by taking 25% of the available water from surface users and letting it flow down the stream. To help satisfy Kansas, the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is required to take the balance of steps necessary.

Irrigators may increase the amount of water they use on the field if they work to help keep the State in compliance. This provides an incentive for every individual to work toward the common good of all, and hopefully generate some creative solutions.

Principal Introducer:

Senator Mark Christensen