

Ann Diers

From: Ann Bleed [ableed@dnr.state.ne.us]
Sent: Thursday, December 08, 2005 10:48 AM
To: Steve Gaul; Ann Diers; Jim Cannia
Subject: FW: Agendas

-----Original Message-----

From: Jay Rempe [mailto:JayR@nefb.org]
Sent: Wednesday, December 07, 2005 3:18 PM
To: Eugene T. Glock
Cc: Ann Bleed; David Cookson; Don Krauss; Dave Sands; Gloria Erickson; Jim Cannia; Jody Gittins; John Turnbull; Lumir Jedlicka; Patrick Heath; Ron Bishop; Steve Gaul; Tom Schwarz
Subject: Re: Agendas

Everyone,

I've been out of the office the past three days and haven't had the opportunity to participate in the exchange of ideas. But I wanted to take the opportunity to add my two cents worth to the discussion. Attached is another alternative for us to consider on how to approach the issue. I will try to give greater details during tomorrow's call. It includes the recommendations the Task Force has already made in regards to LB 962 implementation costs and local funding and tries to incorporate ideas on how to secure additional funding for water conservation programs.

I've had the opportunity to visit with several state senators, both those on the Appropriations Committee and those not, over the past few weeks, and I have walked away convinced that we are not going to be able to ask for funding for the general idea of "incentive programs" and expect to be successful. Nor is there much interest in a ballot referendum on water funding. Thus, I think we need to pursue a more targeted approach. This approach would work with DNR, NRDs and irrigation districts to identify activities and pilot projects to be initiated in Republican and Platte basins to reduce water use. Cost estimates can be provided and a specific list could be provided to the Legislature on how the dollars will be spent. In the meantime, we continue to explore, and encourage the Legislature to work towards, a long-term solution.

Jay E. Rempe
Nebraska Farm Bureau Federation

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12/8/2005

DNR 015485

1. Fund implementation and operation costs for LB 962 (\$7.5 million)
 - \$3.5 million in state funds (\$1.5 million—DNR; \$2.0 million—state aid NRDs)
 - \$4.0 million local funds
2. Additional Funding for data/research/modeling (\$2-2.5 million)
 - Needs as identified by DNR and university
 - Needs not included in DNR budget request
 - General funds—NRDs can offer financial assistance
3. Water Use Reductions (\$5-10 million)
 - a) Identify specific activities/pilot projects in Republican to be initiated in the next 1-2 years to help with compliance. Possible activities could include:
 - Surface water leases
 - Riparian management
 - EQIP in the quick response area
 - Additional CREP acres
 - Water Claim transfer idea
 - Groundwater pumping
 - Permanent retirement of CREP
 - b) Identify activities/pilot projects in the Platte Basin to begin work towards reducing impacts to stream flows to 1997 levels in over appropriated area. Possible activities could include:
 - Pumpkin Creek EQIP
 - Permanent retirement of CREP
 - CNPPID proposal
 - Catalog/identify use reductions since 1997
4. Recommend that NRDs be provided 4 cents additional property tax authorities to be used specifically for integrated plans implementation cost and water use reduction programs for local matching.
5. Recommend the state and local governments explore possible federal programs and means to leverage federal dollars to assist with programs.
6. Recommend state funding come from (the list generated earlier by the committee):
 - Earmarking state tax receipts
 - General fund appropriations
 - Annual fees on property records
 - Equitable fees on all water use (in the Legislature's charge to the Dept.)
 - Tax credits on conservation easements

7. Recommend that it is the Task Force's best estimate that the state's portion for the above types of activities related to LB 962 implementation and compact compliance into the foreseeable future will remain at the above levels (\$10-15 million). Thus, the Legislature should seriously consider a ballot referendum to create a dedicated source of funding for the long-term stewardship of our ground and surface water resources.