

Water sustainability bill signed into law

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Gov. Dave Heineman signed LB 1098 into law which aims to address water management, water quality and flood control issues.

The governor was joined by State Sen. Tom Carlson of Holdrege, who introduced the bill in the 2014 Legislative Session, and State Sen. Mark Christensen of Imperial, who has been a legislative advocate on water issues.

“This is noteworthy water legislation pertaining to Nebraska’s long-term water utilization and planning,” said Heineman. “Water is one of Nebraska’s most important natural resources and this bill reflects our emphasis on water sustainability and water management.”

The bill creates the Water Sustainability Fund which will be used to contribute to multiple water supply management goals, assess flood control, increase efficiency of water usage, enhance water quality and comply with interstate compacts and other agreements.

“This is the most significant bill for agriculture and livestock production in my eight years in the legislature,” said Carlson of Holdrege. “I want to thank the governor for signing the bill, the legislature for the 48-0 vote, and the task force and senators on that task force in an advisory capacity that worked so hard to put LB 1098 together.”

“Basin-wide planning will provide groundwater and surface water users the opportunity to find positive solutions within the Republican River Basin,” said Christensen.

This bill would also expand the Natural Resources Commission from 16 to 27 members. Currently, three members are appointed by the governor and 13 are elected to represent river basins across Nebraska. The commission will include a diversity of water users in our state, including groundwater and surface water irrigators, public power districts and wildlife conservation groups, as well as others involved in agriculture.

“Preserving and managing our water resources is important to Nebraskans, especially those

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who work in our number one industry—agriculture,” Heineman said.