

By Carolyn Lee

The Imperial Republican

Chances are “very slim” that a bill to repair the dam at Champion Lake will pass the Nebraska Legislature this year, according to its sponsor, Sen. Mark Christensen of Imperial.

A hearing for LB 289 was held March 11 in the Appropriations Committee, where it is still being held.

Christensen was asking for \$55,000 to match FEMA money to repair the dam, put in a berm, dredge dirt out of the lake and dam, and remove trees behind the dam. The lake has been empty since gates on the dam were damaged during a flood almost two years ago.

Christensen said the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, which oversees the Champion Mill and lake, doesn’t have the funds to repair the dam, nor does the state.

The Department of Natural Resources has the final say in the issue, he said.

“The gates meet the code as of now,” he stated. “I’ve been trying to do it (bring the lake back to life) for two years now, and I can’t seem to get it done.”

Game and Parks Superintendent Bill Christensen said he plans to continue offering tours of the Mill, but hopes the dam gets rebuilt. “The pond is important,” he said, “but the Mill is the historic aspect.” He couldn’t comment on the Game and Parks Commission’s plans for the area.