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LB 605

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SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Wickersham. You've heard the opening on the Wickersham amendment, AM1628 to LB 605. We're now open for discussion. Senator Schrock, on the amendment.

SENATOR SCHROCK: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, I rise to oppose the Wickersham amendment. I did hear what you had to say, Senator Bob. I think the ethanol program in the state of Nebraska is a success story. You call it a give away program, I call it credits earned. We enticed people to locate ethanol plants in this state, and it was funded, partially, by a grain checkoff, and partially by General Funds. We have capacity in this state, at the present time, to process 20 percent of the feed grain grown in this state through our ethanol facilities. Granted, a substantial part of that probably comes from Iowa in the case of the plant at Blair. And I would also tell you, Senator Wickersham, you said your area of the state has not benefitted. Your area of the state, in all due respect, is not a large feed grain producing area of the state. There are 11 counties in the Panhandle. My one county that I live in produces more corn than those 11 counties do, but we're getting closer. I think there's a good possibility of a wheat facility at Imperial, and at Sutherland, I think Senator Pederson will have a plant in Lincoln County. It has impacted the market. There's lots of studies been done. We can maybe attribute the price of grain being better because of ethanol in this state anywhere from 5 to 20 cents. Believe the studies you want to believe. But for whatever the study may be, it is better because of ethanol in the state of Nebraska. I will tell you that I live probably 60 miles from the closest ethanol plant and very little grain from my area of the state gets processed through ethanol. But it does impact the market and I think we did make a bargain. And the program we started does not end until the year, until January 1st, the year 2001, or December 31st, the year 2000, whatever. It still has a little over a year and a half to run, and we can use to our advantage these EPIC Funds for new, expanded production and I think we should do so. I think the...I think we annually use \$6 million out of the General Fund to support ethanol, subsidize ethanol, whatever. The state of Minnesota, which grows less corn than we