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FLOOR DEBATE

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Association, is if not this, what? We cannot abandon this program. I have been told the state of Nebraska spends less than 2 percent of its budget on environmental issues, and I can think of no environmental issue more important than our water quality program. So with this opening, I will try to answer questions. If Senator Wickersham has a proposal that the money should come from property taxes and we can guarantee that the money will be there, and I do have concerns about some of those processes, then that's an alternative that maybe could be acceptable. So with that, I will close on the amendment. I ask for your consideration. I am looking for your discussing.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Schrock. Are you through, Senator Schrock, with your opening? You've heard the opening on AM1089 to LB 329. Open for discussion on that amendment, Senator Jensen, followed by Senators Don Pederson, Beutler and Wickersham. Senator Jensen.

SENATOR JENSEN: Thank you, Mr. President, and members of the body. I appreciate Senator Brock or Senator Schrock for trying to find a source of funds for a very important program. Quality water in this state has been and should be...and should be in the future an extremely important issue that we would try to find funding for. And I realize that when the fertilizer tax went off that the NRDs did not have dollars to keep this program going. However, I think what we're doing is just switching it from one hand, from one pocket to another pocket, and I don't like it in either pocket. I didn't...I did not like funding the water resources out of the fertilizer tax, nor do I like funding it now out of the pest...and taxing pesticides to do that. I did have a bill which did not make it out of Revenue that would have, however, put this tax into a fee or an increase in tax for cigarettes. That's an air quality issue but we would shift that over to a water quality issue, both quality issues which I think in the state are very, very important. But to switch this tax to now pesticides I think is wrong. First of all, you're covering many, many applicators, both commercial, those in the residential field. Every applicator, every lawn service business in the urban communities as well as rural communities are going to have to pay an increase...an increased fee. Also on the farm locations, every co-op, every ag land operation that