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realized that southern California metropolitan areas were literally saturated with illicit cigarette trafficking. The product was being sold on street corners out of trunks, at catering trucks, in stores, bars, warehouses, by the pack and by the carton or by the container load. So I guess the point I'm trying to make is I don't believe the numbers about smoking going down. Senator Engel mentioned that if we adopt a higher tax, our level of consumption will appear to have gone down here in Nebraska, but those numbers do not take into account the border bleed and the contraband cigarettes. And with that, I think I will listen to the rest of the discussion. Thank you.

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: Senator Vrtiska.

SENATOR VRTISKA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, members of the body. I know that a lot of discussion has been on this particular amendment and I...I will support the amendment. I don't know where it's going to go, but the reason I would support it is because I think it does several things. But at the same time, my concerns are some that's been expressed and that is, how much...how much will cigarette smoking and the use of tobacco go down with this, and will we, in fact, get any...very much more money than we're getting now? And that's really not important. The important part is, if it does stop...help stop smoking, then we'll also help stop the costs of those people who end up with diseases that...that could be avoided had they not smoked. Somebody made a comment about earmarking funds and that's not the right way to do it. I would agree except that, and this is not sour grapes, but I think all of us remember a year ago we earmarked \$2.5 million to the Antelope Valley and the Riverfront Project out of the...out of the cigarette tax fund, and it didn't seem that earmarking at that time was such a bad idea, so I don't know that it's such a bad idea at this time. And that's not sour grapes, that's just a matter of fact, and I...I respect the fact that the Legislature made that decision and now I'm willing to live with it. But it kind of flies in the face of saying that earmarking is not the right thing to do, and to say that we're going to put funds in specific projects has been an age-old tradition around here as far as legislation is concerned, and I don't know, I don't think we're going to stop right now. I don't know if you can get 25 votes to advance this