

April 18, 1979

LB 571

dollars of increased oil imports this nation loses two hundred thousand jobs. I think that indicates to all of us that energy is a situation, is a problem which faces every one of us and the solution to the energy problem should be of concern to all of us. I know there are those who will in good conscience oppose the legislation for a variety of reasons and I am sure they are sincere but I would suggest that many of the concerns that we have may be unfounded but that the concerns of the energy shortage are in fact real. This is not, and I want to emphasize, this is not a total answer to the energy problem. It may not even be the answer but it is one area we can explore and it is one which I believe we have the responsibility to develop because it is the one resource that this state has which can be developed. Unless we do something, we continue down the road we have followed in the past and since, I believe, November 1st the price of gasoline at local stations has increased between fifteen and twenty cents per gallon. We have been promised further price increases. We have been told there may be shortages resulting in rationing. We have been told that there have been dire consequences that will result in the future unless this nation solves its energy problem. So I would suggest to you that if you have any serious qualms about this proposal that you nonetheless support the idea based upon the recognition that whatever we do we are going to have some criticism. I am especially pleased at the state's leading newspaper, after some hesitation for a number of years, only yesterday editorially supported LB 571. It is a matter of great satisfaction to me personally and I think to the members of this Legislature. I want to commend the members of this body both present and past for the leadership they have shown, the dedication they have evidenced in attempting to solve the problem. At this time, Mr. President, I would be willing to answer questions or I would be willing to allow others to speak on the bill.

PRESIDENT: The Chair recognizes Senator Maresh.

SENATOR MARESH: Mr. President and members of the Legislature, about two weeks ago I attended a meeting of the Midwest Conference of State Governments in Chicago. The problem we were studying was alternate sources of energy and all the members that I was on the panel with considered gasohol as an alternate source of fuel. We had a young man from Wisconsin talk to us about what they are planning to do, that a groups of cooperatives are uniting and they are building a thirty million dollar plant and they have come up with a new system of producing alcohol which will be produced at a cost of about seventy cents a gallon.