

April 5, 1989

LB 161

with the EPA, Mr. Morris Kay, who is the Director of the Kansas City Office of the EPA, and we worked out what we thought was a good piece of legislation, LB 161. After the introduction of the bill, there became a need, I think, by some groups to withdraw their support or have their support for the bill waver somewhat. There is a certain amount of nervousness that I sense by some of the farm organizations and, in particular, the fertilizer organization that we are moving too quickly on this particular piece of legislation, even though the first discussion of this was some 10 to 15 years ago. I think it is about time we stood up and took part in this program, but it doesn't appear as if I have enough support right now to proceed with the bill. I have introduced, previous to this time, an interim study resolution that the department or the Ag Committee is going to do this summer to continue the discussion between us and the department or the EPA. The primary concern I think is, one, what kind of control that we will have over the program, if it is a federal program implemented by the state, and, number two, the concern of the funding level that the EPA will provide in matching funds to the State of Nebraska in carrying out the program. Because of that, I feel it is necessary to at least lay the bill over until next year, and in the meantime, the Ag Committee will have an opportunity to discuss these concerns with EPA officials, and continue the dialogue I believe with our farm organizations and our chemical organizations across the state. There are those, I want to tell you, because I have spoken with them, there are those in the chemical industry that want to see the state take over this program. There has been some suggestion that nobody wants the program, that is not necessarily the case, but I think that we are moving in a direction in which we will eventually become part of what many other states have already done in taking over the program, but at this time, I have made a pledge to the organizations involved that would be impacted by this legislation that we would move slowly on it and make sure that everyone's concerns were properly heard by the committee, and by me, as principal introducer of 161. I would like to see the bill maintain its place in the order on General File for next year, so that after the study has been completed by the committee and we have had a chance to research some of the concerns that people have, we can come back in here and have a good discussion as to the impact that this bill will have on the state and upon the protection of our groundwater and soil in this state, which have been suffering in certain cases because of contamination, both natural and by application chemicals. So with that,

3516