

part of the Hefner amendment. Senator Lowell Johnson, followed by Senators Nelson and Morrissey.

SENATOR L. JOHNSON: I will go now. Mr. Speaker and members of the Legislature, thank you for allowing me to make a couple of remarks on LB 325. I am pleased to join Senator Hefner and the other co-sponsors on this bill, seeking your support for the purposes of the amendment. We certainly aren't arguing that plastic has no place in our society. LB 325 only seeks to eliminate some of the negative aspects of plastics uses. Making plastic products more environmentally benign would, in fact, enhance its status in our society. The growing nuisance and the environmental threat posed by accumulating plastics in our landfill is obvious to anyone.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Excuse me, Senator Johnson. (Gavel.) The members will please desist. Senator Johnson is entitled to be heard. Proceed.

SENATOR L. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You don't have to be a PHD or have a PHD in environmental science to be alarmed and even ashamed of our blowing plastic debris or to understand that disposing of plastic waste is an extremely expensive enterprise and one that is growing more impossible each day. We no longer have the luxury of dumping everything into a hole in the ground. We can't even dig a hole deep enough to hold it anymore. To adopt the amendments without the modifications Senator Hefner is proposing would be a tragic waste of our time today and would show a total disregard for the progress made to develop biodegradable plastics. We have the Governor's research initiative, private research investments, contributions from the Corn Development and Utilization Board and some of our best university researchers engaged in solving problems associated with solid waste disposal. A very significant amount of money and creative energy has been directed towards this effort. Frankly, if we are not going to recognize some of the results of our dedicated research efforts, perhaps we had ought to give the farmers back some of their checkoff funds. It would be a cruel and demoralizing trick to play on those we have encouraged to develop degradable plastic technologies to tell them we aren't going to use what they have to offer. None of us, I think, would argue that there will not be some costs associated with converting our society to the use of degradable plastic products but there are also costs involved in not moving ahead. Many of our plastic containers in use today will be around for