

the Ethanol Board to proceed. I am not very pleased with the way the Ethanol Board has been conducting itself. In fact, a constituent of mine, Mrs. Wanda Dahlsten, was recently appointed to the board and just recently resigned from the board based upon the fact that the board handled itself very poorly, in her opinion, and I think, internally, the board needs to get its act together, but as far as the bids that have been out there, the interest in developing ethanol programs in this state, I think we're right at the edge of getting some substantial things done. And so, taking the money away from them, even though we're not necessarily putting it in other areas, it's still going to be available for the board to use at a later date, it seems appropriate that we just continue to allow them to keep the funds and, hopefully, the right projects will come along that they feel is important enough to make an investment in. They have been, I think, very prudent in their approach to the bids, the offers that have come in from various business interests in the ethanol industry and I think that's wise. As I said, there have been some 20 different companies that are showing interest in the ethanol industry in our state and I think it would be unwise of us to hand...basically, handcuff the committee or the board at a time when really it looks as if some progress is going to be made. And I would just ask this body...this, as I said, is not asking for state tax dollars, this is simply asking to put the money back into the program so that they can continue to operate and, hopefully, a project will be developed within the next year so that they can make a substantial investment in it. With that, I would move the amendment.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Thank you. Senator Coordsen, discussion, followed by Senators Warner and Smith.

SENATOR COORDSEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and members of the body, a few years ago when the Legislature created the checkoff for the development of the ethanol industry and the levy of one and a half cents a bushel with a one-cent refundable provision was placed upon the producers of the major feed grain in the State of Nebraska, I was probably one of the people that was opposed to it, not from the...well, I know I was opposed to it, not from the standpoint of a lack of belief that the industry was not a viable industry, but from, basically, five years of exposure to promotions by what could be gently termed as con men in the industry that were traveling the United States trying to attract public dollars as a reward for their technical expertise I think was a fairly common term that we saw in all the