

SPEAKER BARRETT: Senator Haberman, followed by Senator Rogers.

SENATOR HABERMAN: Mr. President and members of the body, I would like to review this tax that was placed upon these farmers and it is a tax. This legislation was passed in 1986. They started to collect the present \$17 million in 1986. Absolutely nothing, nothing has been done to do anything about ethanol plants. It seems year, after year, after year it's next year, it's the next deal, it's the next promotion. It's always something that's in the future that we can't grab a hold of. It's like quicksilver, you put your finger on it and it scatters in all directions. Please remember what Senator Warner said, July 1 is the deadline. Now there have been rumors that some firm is going to bid on the Hastings plant to close it. I don't believe that's true. I saw the list of people who bid on the Hastings plant. There were about eight or 10 of them that bid on the plant. It will not be revealed until the 12th as to who was awarded the bid and I think we can wait until then to get a better handle on just exactly what's going to happen. Now we have another opportunity to address this proposition. The Agriculture Committee saw fit to hold the bill that returned the money to the farmers, 80 percent of it, and have an interim study this summer. I think that was a wise move. I do not feel...I am not supporting this amendment, \$17 million is a lot of money. This body is in control of that money for a group of farmers. So some people can say, we're not spending tax dollars so let's go ahead and spend it but let's just spend it any way we can. There has been and will be many more schemes to come up to try and take the \$17 million. Once it's gone, it's gone because you're not going to come back, I hope, and try to tax those farmers again. So I support, in this case, the Appropriations recommendation that until July the 1st they have the full fund to operate, then after that if it becomes a necessity to put the full \$17 million back in the hands of the board, we can do so. So, at this time, I ask you to support the Appropriations Committee and do not support the amendment to the bill. Thank you, Mr. President.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Thank you. Senator Elmer, further discussion, followed by Senators Korshoj, Hannibal and Smith.

SENATOR ELMER: Thank you, Mr. President, and members, this fund that was put in place by the farmers of the state is on the verge of having some substantial ways to invest and use, to