

Have you all voted? Record, Mr. Clerk, please.

CLERK: 31 ayes, 4 nays, Mr. President, on adoption of Senator Peterson's amendment to the bill.

PRESIDENT: The Peterson amendment is adopted. What do you have next, Mr. Clerk?

CLERK: Mr. President, the next amendment I have is by Senators Rod Johnson, Baack and Smith.

PRESIDENT: (Gavel.) Shall we hold it down so we can hear the speakers, we're getting awfully noisy, please. Thank you. Senator Rod Johnson.

SENATOR R. JOHNSON: Mr. President and members, Senators Baack, Smith and I are offering an amendment to LB 813 that would return \$10 million to the Ethanol Board Cash Fund for the purposes of potentially funding ethanol projects in the State of Nebraska. As you recall, the ethanol...or the Appropriations Committee chose to only give \$1.2 million, approximately, to the Ethanol Board and withhold the rest of the checkoff dollars in reserve for at least a year. There were a variety of arguments given as to why they decided to do this. In my years as a member of this Legislature I am unaware of any time before, and maybe Senator Schmit or Senator Warner can better define this for me since they've been a member longer than I have. But to my knowledge we have never withheld checkoff funds from a checkoff organization. So I think we've set somewhat of a new precedent here by withholding the funds. As you also recall, I offered an amendment to return the entire \$16.1 million that is now in the fund back to the fund. However, that amendment failed on Select...or General File. Senator Baack, Senator Smith and I are offering what we consider to be a compromise to the issue here by asking for only \$10 million of those funds to allow the board then to use those funds to make loans, grants or support of projects that might come along for the construction of ethanol plants in our state. The only point I will make is that in my conversation this morning with Senator Coordsen, who is a former member of the sorghum checkoff board, he commented to me something I think that made sense to me, and that is, he said, if we don't have the confidence in the checkoff board to manage its affairs and to properly expend their cash funds then it seems relevant that we simply dissolve the board, return the funds and eliminate the program. I guess I'm of that thought,