

if we don't have the confidence in a board that was appointed by the Governor, a program that was passed by this Legislature to exercise wisdom and judgment in its approval of the funds that they have to expend, then I think we should just get rid of the program. I'd like to see the program work. I think that there is some potential in this area to move forward and I'd like to see that the board has at least \$10 million, or actually \$11 million to use this coming fiscal year on projects that they might see fit to fund. And I guess I would leave that local decision up to the board to make the right decisions on projects to expand the ethanol industry in our state. So, with that, whatever remaining time I have on my opening, Mr. President, I would give to Senator Baack.

PRESIDENT: Senator Baack, you have two minutes.

SENATOR BAACK: Yes, Mr. President, and colleagues, Senator Johnson has done a good job of explaining what this amendment is all about. And I think he made an excellent point when he said that we do have to have some confidence in these boards and in these checkoff boards, because we have to tell them and we have to say that we're going to give you the responsibility to spend these monies properly, we're always watching them, of course, and we're keeping a close eye on those things. But I think that in this case we need to put these dollars back in there. If we do have some projects that come up in the next year, if we only have \$1 million in there, we are simply going to put a financial bind on these checkoffs where they are not going to be able to deal with these new projects. I think that we have reached a very reasonable compromise here by saying that instead of the full 17 million being available we are saying there will be \$10 million additional available, making a total of \$11 million available to the checkoff board to use those dollars in case there are projects that come up that need to be funded and that are very worthwhile as far as the promotion of the ethanol industry. The ethanol industry is very important to this state, and I think anything that we can do to promote the ethanol industry we should do. And I think this is one small step in doing that. We're not adding \$10 million to our budget, we're simply saying that we're going to give an additional \$10 million that are available from the cash fund of the ethanol authority, that those monies will be available for projects that are worthwhile in the State of Nebraska. With that, I would simply urge the body to adopt this amendment. Thank you, Mr. President.